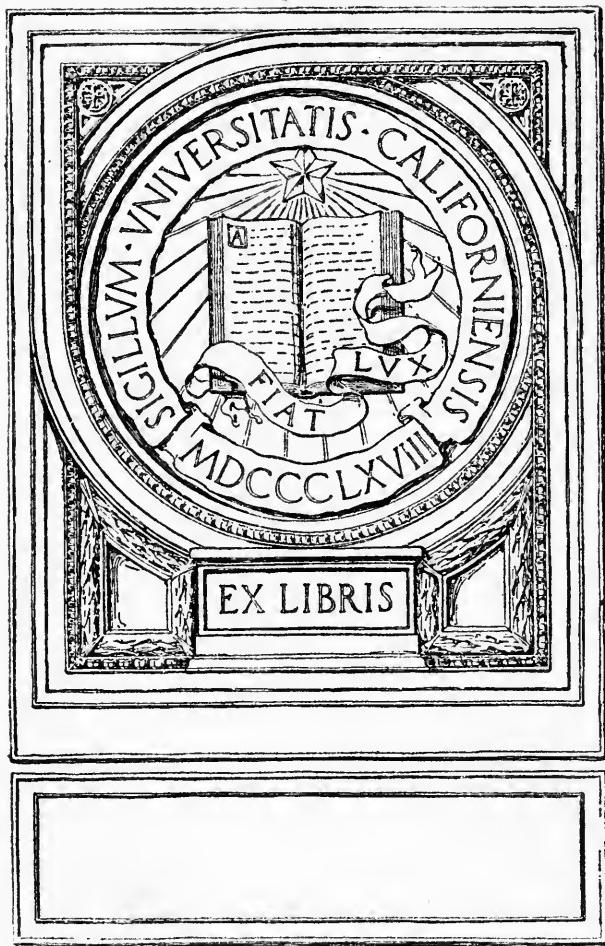


ITALY AND THE ITALIANS

By
**EDWARD
HUTTON**



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AND
THE ITALIANS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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I T A L Y
AND
THE ITALIANS

BY
EDWARD HUTTON
AUTHOR OF 'FREDERIC UVEDALE' AND 'STUDIES IN
THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS'

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

SECOND EDITION

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TO MY FRIEND.

D. S. MELDRUM, Esq.

Preface.

TO-NIGHT, under a nearly full moon, the peasants are practising their dances and songs for to-morrow's feast—the feast of St Sebastian. I am brought from the fireside about ten o'clock out under the stars, to listen to them. The sky is very clear, and the moon rides easily, like a pale lady on horseback, among the stars, that seem incomparably far away. The plaintive, poignant sweetness of the mandolins floating away from me out across the silver levels of water, throbs almost bitterly it seems to me, as I lean over the verandah listening. Just at the bottom of my garden, but on higher ground,—on a kind of a promontory, in fact, that juts out into the sea,—is the cemetery, full of tall calm cypresses that look jet black against the paleness of the sky. Far away, somewhere deep down in the valley, a bugle calls, and as the notes gallop towards me, a curious emotion sweeps through my blood, and I feel the splendours of the pageants and of all the royalty of the emperors and kings that are no more. The bugle ceases, and a quiet wind creeps round

the house through the orange-trees, and once more the throb of the mandolins takes full possession of me, and I wait to hear what the singers will sing.

For some time they do nothing but dance. Such funny dances! Up and down the road they go for fifty yards, the mandolins bitterly upbraiding. And then over all, quite suddenly, the wail of a violin. Unseen by me the musician has joined the group, and now the measure becomes less uncouth, less barbaric, perhaps less modern. As the dancers become warmer they throw aside their cloaks and the figures grow more intricate, the throbbing mandolins more insistent, the breathing deeper and less regular; and at last, when a mandolin breaks as it were from control and shrieks terribly, somewhere high up on the "E" string, the dancers break from one another and throw themselves down on the roadside.

Then the singing begins while the dancers rest. Very glad singing it is, with nothing of sadness in it, but of that sweet sentimental kind that is one of the common denominators of all the world. "Santa Lucia" they sing—so old, but one never wearies of it,—"Addio! Addio!" and some more songs which delight the visitors at Venice and Naples—songs which we all, once at any rate in our life, believed could never be bettered.

The dancing begins again, receding now down the hill slowly, until the night comes up out of the valley and swallows it. I walk up and down the verandah, light a cigarette and determine to enjoy

the beauty of the night for a few minutes. The sky is a deeper blue now, and the stars are not so pale, not so utterly distant. Orion is lying on his side, and Mars—it must be Mars, he looks so red—is stealing up out of the east. The old town lies at my feet, sleeping as it has done these last seven hundred years, between the mountains and the sea. The old towers, their tiles glistening in the moonlight, rise silently towards heaven. A clock strikes suddenly without any preparation, slowly and meditatively; another, more distant, answers it more hurriedly; in my study my own little carriage-clock pipes too, raising an utterly childish, inadequate voice that cannot possibly reach much farther than the verandah. Still the sky is clear, and the wind from the hills carries the clock notes towards Greece. How far will they go that have just struck midnight here?

I am just thinking of going in—have indeed thrown away my cigarette—when something stops me. It sounds like a very tiny note from high up on the “E” string of a mandolin. But they have all gone home, these singers and dancers,—home to bed to dream of to-morrow and the *festa*.

No; what was that? I lean over the verandah and there below me in the road are two tiny figures, a boy and a girl. The boy cannot be more than ten, and the girl, though the taller of the two, is certainly less than twelve years old. A mandolin is slung over the boy’s shoulders, and he reaches blunderingly I think for it, till his sister swings it

round for him ; and they both, at a whispered word from the girl, drop me curtseys.

“ Let me sing to you, signore,” says the little girl ; “ we too love San Sebastiano.”

The boy tunes his mandolin, and then, with just a simple note or two, startlingly abrupt, they begin. It is a curious song—where have I heard the words before ?—set to a curious music. The notes come as it were in little heaps, with no regular time that I can grasp, but with a kind of spiritual sweetness and clearness, exactly fitting the time and the semi-darkness. Two such curious little figures they look, singing in piping treble there in the road under my window. This is what they sing :—

“ Fior di mortelle
 Queste manine tue son tanto belle.
 Zompa llari-llirà.
 Fior di limone
 Ti voglio far morire di passione !
 Zompa llari-llirà.

Fiore di nardo
 Passa Rosina mia : mi dà uno sguardo.
 Zompa llari-llirà !
 Fiore di Rosa !
 Piangi mio ben, perchè ? vuoi qualche cosa ?
 Zompa llari-llirà.

Fiore di spica
 Collera, o bella, in me non entra mica
 Zompa llari-llirà.
 Fiore di menta,
 Questa parola mia ben ti rammenta.
 Zompa llari-llirà.”

They sing it right through to the end, and then the boy's fingers wander over the mandolin strings still playing the air. Where can they have learnt that song?

I ask them. "Oh," says the girl, "yes, signore. Giovanni-Battista heard it read out of a paper, and made a tune for it: it is his favourite song."

"Sing some more, then, if you would please me," I say, giving them some money. They whisper together for a time; the mandolin is silent now; they look just like two little wild-flowers dropped on the road. I can only see their upturned faces.

Something is wrong, the girl is down on her hands and knees looking for something.

"He has dropped the plettro, signore," she says, "and one cannot play a mandolin with one's fingers."

"Wait a moment," I say, "I will bring a light." I go into the house and fetch a big hall lamp, and the girl and I search for the plettro, in vain.

"Come and help us, Giovannino," I say. He does not move, but looks on with wide eyes,—eyes that seem to look me through and through, gazing out of a white, spiritual face.

"Are you blind, Giovannino?" I say; "come and help us look for your plettro."

"Yes, signore, he is blind," says the little girl; "but," she adds quickly, putting her arm round her brother—"but he is a great musician, aren't you, Giovanni?"

"Yes," says the boy with a sigh, "I am a great

musician." He says it as though it were not so great a thing after all—as though it certainly were not worth that blindness.

The moonbeams play upon his face, he seems not to feel the light at all; a more spiritual, almost uncanny face, full of a kind of twilight I don't think I have ever seen. He stands quite still, waiting. But it cannot be found, this plettro, that has given us so much trouble. I ask them will they not come into the house and have some supper.

"No, thank you, signore," says the girl, "we will go home; it is late, and San Sebastiano is here."

They go off down the road, she leading the boy who is blind and who has lost his plettro, but who is so great a musician; and I, as I turn and watch them in the moonlight, there where they go down into the valley where all is so quiet and so dark, find my eyes wet with tears. Surely this is Italy that I have seen on the eve of San Sebastiano, Italy who is blind and who has lost her plettro.

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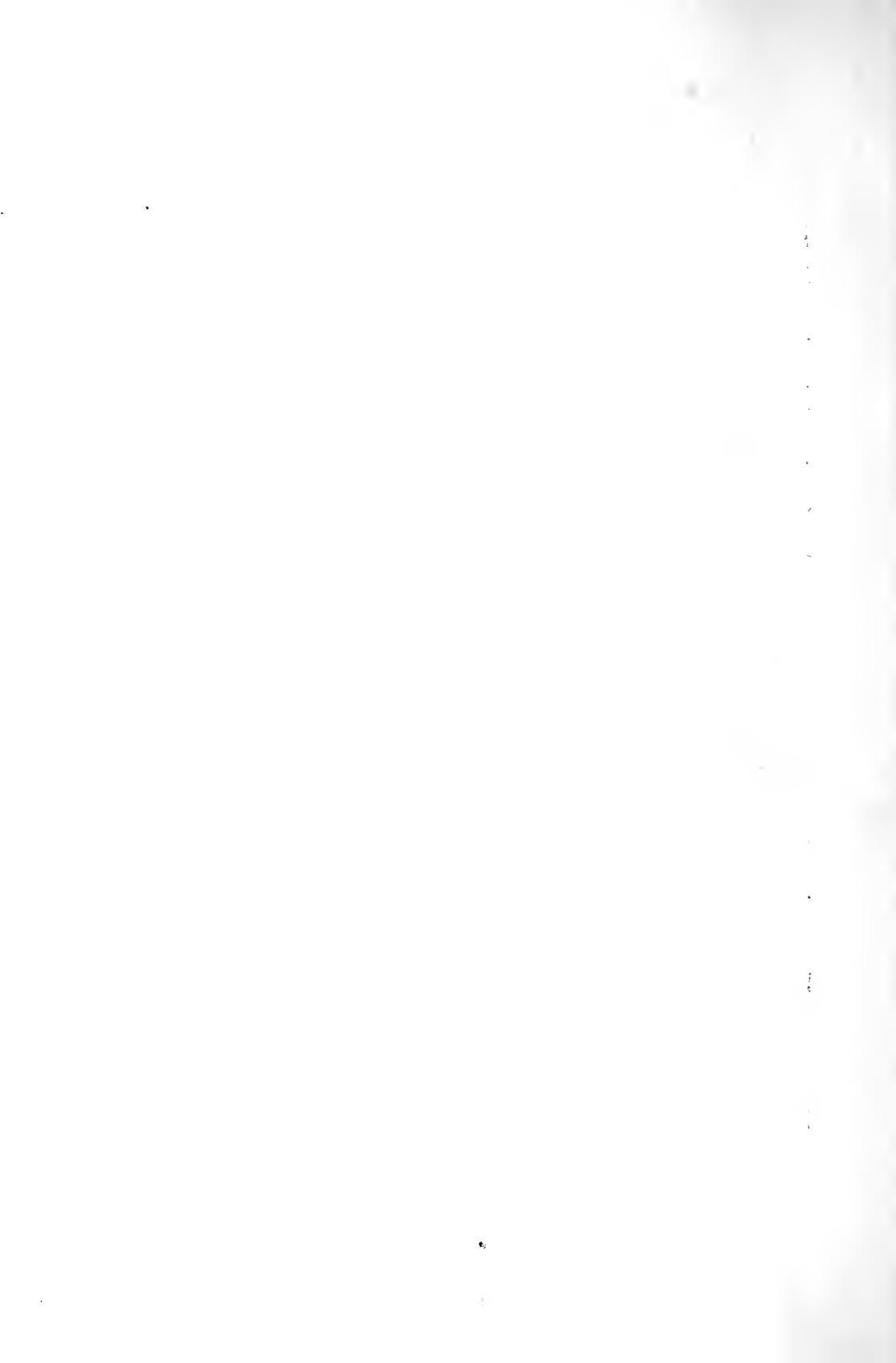
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Impressions of Italy of To-Day

I.

ON THE WAY.

“A MONGST those many advantages which conduce to enrich the mind with knowledge, to rectify the judgment and improve outward manners, foreign travel is none of the least. But to be a sedentary traveller only, penned up between walls, and to stand poring all day upon a map, upon imaginary circles and scales, is like him who thought to come to be a good fencer by looking on Agrippa’s book postures only. But, indeed, this is the prime use of travel, which therefore may be not imperfectly called a moving Academy of the true Peripatetic school. This made Ulysses to be cried up so much amongst the Greeks for their greatest wise man, because he had travelled through many strange countries and observed the manners of divers nations, having seen, as it was said and sung of him, more cities than there were houses in Athens, which was much in that age of the world; and the greatest of their Emperors did use to glory in nothing so often as that he had surveyed more land with his eye than other kings could comprehend with their thoughts. Amongst other people of the earth, Islanders seem to stand in most need of foreign travel, for they, being cut off as it were from the rest of the citizens of the world, have not those obvious accesses and contiguity

of situation and other advantages of society to mingle with those more refined nations whom learning and knowledge did first urbanize and polish."

So in the seventeenth century wrote James Howell in the beginning of his 'Instructions for Foreign Travel' for the use of us Islanders, almost as though he had been retained for a seventeenth-century Mr Cook or Mr Gaze. Yet pardon me, reader, if, with all the will in the world, I fail to maintain so reasonable an attitude. In truth it was in some such mood that I set out one day of spring on foot for Italy; but I had scarcely gone a score of miles through France before my old world, home-sick from the first, had turned back homewards, and I, not altogether without a kind of joy, was talking with some peasants over a bottle of wine in an inn, and found that I, too, was one of the "Peripatetic school" in earnest, and had already begun to whisper to-morrow to myself as a thing of great comfort, and was, indeed, a pilgrim through my world of beckoning roads as I had ever been, though maybe unwillingly, from this world to the next. So I made pilgrimage to the Land of Heart's Desire, and longed with a great longing for the end of the journey, knowing all the time that it was the journey itself that was the end, the great reward. And among innumerable hostelries, inns, taverns, wine shops, monasteries, chapels, and caverns, I discovered almost without knowing it the Island of Once, for which, perhaps, I had set out. Nor, believe me, was I too lonely on the way. I went

by the old highways. The roads down which I travelled were worn white by the feet of saints and sinners, kings and peasants, and the pilgrims to the Eternal City for over a thousand years. Hot and tired, I, too, had climbed that last intolerable hill, and despaired, oh, far away! that faint shimmer to the southward that my heart told me must be the Mediterranean. It was a far journey; shall I ever, in some fortunate year, or in a marvellous sweet dream before I die, see that white road again? Shall I once more, footsore and almost weeping with the steepness of the way, under an implacable night, see with a passion of joy the friendly lights of the inn by the wayside? Shall I ever again talk with the dreamers in the fields at evening or pray with the monks in the mountains or listen to the music of the villages? Oh, has my God so sweet a recompence for me in His heart, after all, before I must for ever forget the sun? I never envied Borrow with his Bible in Spain since I have walked with the saints beside clear rivers, under shivering poplars, and with kings through the plains of France, nor, busied with these, did I forget to love the people by the way. Oh world! how can a man bear to die? Have not the children laughed with me because we were alive and because I went down the road, staying nowhere long, having no abiding city?

So I met Life, not in the city, where, it may well be, one would not give up all for her as I would

do, but in the winds of the great plains of France, that went past me for days like a splendid host, and in the sun of the south and in the shadows of the olive-gardens of Italy. And I have known, at a turn of the road in the silence of the sunshine, or at the sudden noise of waves far below me, or at some gesture of the mountains, or when a child has led me into some immortal city, a passion of sudden glory fill my being, so that for a moment I too have seen, as it were, the gates of Paradise and the angel with the flaming sword. And once, in a lonely and sweet place, I lived for a week with a shepherd whom I had met tending his sheep as in old time. And he told me the history of the world under an almond-tree that had just finished blossoming. He was lonely on the mountains and told the time by the sun ; yet he, too, had dreamed of invincible cities and of the villages among the vines, and of Death that was still unashamed under the stars.

“Ah,” he said to me on a night of innumerable stars, “all the stars of God’s house cannot put out the Night.”

So I passed ever towards Rome. And at the end of my day’s journey I was not so terribly far from the place whence I had set out in the morning, as you will surely be, making pilgrimage, as I foresee you will, by railway. And yet, as God is my judge, reader, what in this earth I love have I in common with you ? God, who is our Father, knows. Even

if you have read so far, my shepherd, who was a thousand times more real than you can ever be, has sent you, it may be, to Baedeker and reality. Reality? Well, I know Italy well, having loved her for a matter of all the long years of youth: drug me in Soho and carry me whither you will, if it be to Italy you have brought me, I would name her; yet if Italy be anywhere in Baedeker, you shall burn me at Amen Corner with the paper and pasteboard of my books.

No, no; for the glory of her name men have been persuaded for more than a thousand years to embrace Death. All the far-fetched greatness, all the eloquent renown, all the pride and splendour of the hearts of men were her birthright, that even our England had to fetch from her fair, invincible cities. How often on a summer's day, in all the weary delight of her sun and sky, have the tears sprung to my eyes as I looked on the pallid splendour of Genoa from the sea, or gazed with a kind of sacred awe from the tower of Pisa upon the immortal gesture of the mountains; or, realising quite suddenly some light among the shadows, some aspect of the sky, some glamour of the evening, my heart has leapt up as I wandered through the streets of that brave, sweet city, the mistress of Dante and Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci, on the banks of Arno. For your soul's safety you dare not look for Italy in Baedeker. But on a night that is musical with voices out of the past, when the tireless singing of

the mandolines comes to you from across that yellow river, and the stars are beating in heaven with the ecstasy of the night, and the profound sky is as tender as the eyes of Mary Madonna, and because of the wideness of the world and the glory of it you are cleansed from all the stains of life and the blackness of the North and the noise of its trumpery cities, there in that hour look into your own heart, and it may well be you will find Italy smiling at you from its most sacred depth.

Love is not to be hired, nor can you buy knowledge with anything but love. And here is the Land of Heart's Desire, the dear land our fathers sought in youth, so that they might have something lovely stored in their hearts to remember in the quiet and noiseless years of age. You dare not follow in their footsteps with that shouting, scarlet book in your hand, led by the buttonhole by a scientific German. He who would see Rome shall never come in the train of the Goth, unless, as before, he comes and finds it a ruin. And yet, I think, indeed, that is what he has done. That destroying army from Northern Europe, that sacked Rome so many ages ago, only grows more innumerable every year, more contemptible, more disgusting; so that really Rome having been destroyed any time these many centuries, it is only the old remorseless ruins that their ancestors have thrown down that the tourist to-day looks on with a languid curiosity. Rome is only immortal in the hearts of men. To the crowd she

is but a heap of ruins, or a noisy modern capital, or the despised and hated Christian name of the Catholic Church. Ah, you who come to her and are to be seen nowadays, alas! among her ruins, listening to innumerable lies, or racing through her galleries, or touting for invitations from her new-made nobles and princes, you all seek something immortal, one may suppose, yet how rudely, how noisily you pursue that which is only to be approached after due ceremony, very quietly, through long lanes of the old culture and after long days and nights of enthusiasm and love. That divinity you seek has fled in fear at your approach. You, sir, are clothed, perhaps, for golf, or some form of violent exercise; are you then in pursuit of that divine being you will never even see? Would you hunt her, sir? And you, madam, it is not, I imagine, possible to offend one so indifferent to the feelings of others, therefore I do not scruple to remind you that in Rome one should do as the Romans do, and not seek in vain, in vain I assure you, to advertise the national dress of the sex from the hockey-fields of Yorkshire or the golf-links of far Idaho. So, where Cæsar trod, where Cæsar sleeps, one can hear to-day the silly shuffle of the flocks of tourists, driven, by the ridiculous barking of the rote-learned sheep-dog guide, from one immortal, desecrated spot to another as emotionless.

And now, in the City that flung out the House of Tarquin in order to welcome, more than two

thousand years later, the House of Savoy, associations of hotel-keepers and other bawds have combined in order to display more in accordance with the barbarian taste the beautiful body of Italy to the vile and ignorant gaze of the Great Beast from every vandal and successful country in Europe. The Italians may now be said to live on the prostitution of their country to the stranger. Monster hotels are built in the beautiful Piazzas in order that any fool who can pay and gape may be housed, not indeed as befits him but in a manner he can admire. The market-places of the people, hallowed for I know not how many centuries, in the pure and lovely memories of those who are happily dead, are pulled down, and German beer-palaces, and flashy and foreign shops, stocked with heavily taxed bad German goods, are run up with a Carnival King a' horseback in the midst of the square that now bears his name, in order that the foreigners from artistic America, or sensitive England, or austere Germany, may not be offended in Italia la Nuova.

This kind of thing is, I think, known as "betterment" to the halfpenny and more ignorant press of my country. Such a digging up and flinging into the dust-heap of our fathers' bones has their applause, I know. They see, no doubt, in that which displaces the beauty that sometimes seems to me to be fleeing from us for ever, the realisation of their own vile imaginations. It may be there is yet a great while for them to triumph. Yet he, our de-

liverer, will one day come, with unscabbarded sword and the tramp of soldiers, or it may be silent as time is and sweet as the dawn. The world has not yet said Amen to the work of the Great Beast.

So, reader, you see you have, after all, been beguiled into reading the book of a very fool, an idealist, a valiant silly-pop, and a dreamer. Yet Italy is an unpractical land; I shall keep you in better humour than your rubicund and portly German. And I shall tell you of new things, perhaps—but not all by way of information.

Will you set out where the road leads? It is my opinion you will not. Yet you will often be weary at evening, but not of the white roads you will seldom see, that are part of the life of me and call me like a woman. Of all that you know nothing. So be it. Yet it may be that on some fortunate night your angel shall lead you, perhaps, to the long-desired steps of San Pietro in Rome, and you too will remember only old things for a time, where, oh, once upon a time, all the kings in the world were proud to kneel, and there even you too may chance to see the gates of Paradise and the angel with the flaming sword.

II.

UNITED ITALY.

IT was perhaps but yesterday that Italy ceased to be a vision and became a Kingdom. Yet she has already thrown far from her the high and sweet dreams of youth, and is grown as sceptical as a disillusioned man at the approach of middle age.

All the heroic figures of the Homeric years of attack and no less noble defence are gone; and with them too has fled Faith, into whose eyes Garibaldi had gazed often upon the cliffs of Sicily, whose words Mazzini never ceased to echo, upon whose lips even to-day the eyes of the Church are set, waiting in magnificent patience till they form the image of the word “Amen.”

It would seem that the mere glance of death is sufficient to make immortal that man upon whom it rests even for a moment. For though Garibaldi had found in the fury and freedom of the sea the secret of his patient desire, it was not till he had been condemned to die for the fierce love he bore

Genoa la Superba that he was mastered by the glory of his passion against authority. It was then, it would seem, that his dauntless spirit first experienced the joy that he ever received from the nearness of danger. And it is almost as a kind of Lucifer that we see him in the end, in rebellion against all Heaven, setting his proud and superb dream as the end of his desire, following it even to the last, scattering before him, in his chase of it, Popes and Kings, while behind him—but his gaze was ever set forwards—followed all the tragedy of his desires, all the misery of the fulfilment of his dreams, all the loathsome bestiality of the crowd, and the immense clamour of implacable greed. So that one realises how even a soul so noble and splendid as his is but the very plaything of its own dreams, the slave of its own ideas for which at the last everything must be sacrificed—all the visions it has really seen, the beauty of the only dreams that were altogether lovely, the gentle nobility of those things it really desired. To love one's land too well has ever proved fatal to the lover: Garibaldi, no less than Sir Walter Raleigh or General Gordon, was killed at last by her to whom he had given everything. Hopelessly out-generated, out-numbered, and out-marched, we see him at the last an old and broken man at the age of sixty-three leading some irregular troops in an alien cause in the Vosges Mountains in the war of '70, as a kind of relief from the unbearable weight of the failure of his dreams,

and at last, on a tiny island bought for him by the English, in the hands of women, he died, June 2, 1882. One has there something of the marvel of the shooting-star, something too of its swiftness in passing away yet remaining as something beautiful and wonderful in our memories. After all, his red-shirts grappled Italy together into one land; and though it may be he was scarcely anything more than a great and cunning captain of irregular troops, his dreams have hypnotised not those troops alone, but a whole world, and for this reason his name stands first among those who in making modern Italy have brought not peace but a sword.

And we find the natural result of their failure in the pretentious statues that are scattered up and down the beautiful cities: it is not that the men they commemorate were not sometimes great and noble, but that those who have commemorated them have for the most part been full of resentment against their enemies, tasteless and tactless, and without the elementary sense of beauty. The statue of Garibaldi on the Janiculum is perhaps one of the most offensive, in that there the dreamer turns eyes that the crowd has dared to believe were impudent on the Vatican and St Peter's Church. It is so childish a sneer there, in sight of the Alban Hills and the mountains that Horace once looked upon, that have seen Romulus slay his brother and have witnessed the expulsion of the kings and the tears of the mother of the Gracchi, that have gazed into the immortal

face of Cæsar and unmoved have witnessed the gathering and passing of his armies, the triumphs accorded by the Senate, and the Judas face of his murderer. Those hills have watched innumerable emperors pass by, have seen the flames leap up that were the tongues shouting the name of the Son of God to all the world. And it is in their sight one finds a huge figure on horseback sneering at all that; suggesting every day and every night the glib lie which Italy has believed so easily; so that she will tell you almost with pride that her history began with the year 1848.

It was on a March evening in that volcanic year that an immense crowd, fascinated and exalted by the dreams and visions of Mazzini, waited before the palace of the King of Savoy in Turin till, inspired by the passions of his people, he, “tired of shrinking alternately from the dagger of the Carbonari and the chocolate of the Jesuits,” appeared with a tricolour flag upon the balcony, and was persuaded almost against his own judgment (“il Re Tentenna”) to declare war on Austria. Doubtless that night saw the star of united Italy creep into the farthest sky. Yet are all her unequalled services, all the noble laws of the Republic, all the red years of Empire, all the splendid victories of the Holy Empire and the ecstatic patience of the Papacy to go for nothing? On that night in 1848 Italy’s recorded history spanned more than 2200 years. Looking back over the fifty four years since that luminous night, can we dare to admit

that these puny months that number less than the years that went before have outweighed in virtue and splendour and glory the heroic ages in the history of what for most of that time was almost the very world? There is little to be very ashamed of in that old and princely yet humble past, but in the sordid years since 1848 we find so few great or splendid sins, so few really heroic men, so little honour, so much vulgarity and vainglory and vile meanness and littleness. What has been ill done, and there has been much ill done, has been magnified in vileness and hatefulness by its unutterable meanness and sordidness. Has Roman history anything so vile, so brutal, to show as the gambling mania that ruined all those princes who tried to make money out of their own defeat and the successes of their enemies, who pandered to the vilest desires for destruction and brutality on the part of the newcomers—the crowd? I cannot find it. Yet that frightful patricide, that bloodless crime, is considered almost as a mere misfortune by the whole world that has really lost its sense of proportion in its passion for gold. It is horrible—humanity is concerned to-day less with the character or the nobility or the birth of a man than with the depth of his pockets. The smartest thief is the most lordly hero; one is confused when the greatest titles are easily acquired by a successful banker or an universal grocer or rhetorical deputy. It is not an aristocracy (Heaven save the word!) of talent one objects to, but an

aristocracy of knaves and villains. How did these men obtain their titles? by birth, by theft, by bribery, by auction? Was Garibaldi a prince or Mazzini a duke in this kingdom "by the grace of God and the will of the people"? Yet what a fool I am—this is no new thing, say you. 'Tis none the less a damnable thing on that account. Perhaps it is the unconscious fault of the Socialist—give every man an equal chance and it will go hard but the knave will win the prize. It is tiresome to lay every evil at the door of the Socialist; moreover, it is useless to do that in Italy. The future is most probably in the hands of the Socialists, and though I am not one of them, I am glad to know for sure that they are not contented with the present state of affairs. But who has the heart now to sing?—

"Fratelli d' Italia
L' Italia s' è desta."

No, no, Italy has fallen asleep again. The old Faiths are worn out, one no longer believes them; there have been disappointments; terrible lies, that have been tended for years with all the care given to a delicate child, have grown up and are devouring the Italians. The Italians—it was easier to find them twenty years ago than it is to-day. To-day there are Romans, Florentines, Neapolitans, Venetians, and a few Italians who it may be either have forgotten where they were born or do not care to tell. Yet the old Faiths are not dead. I am sure

they, like Italy, will awake at the voice of the deliverer. Ah! never doubt that, believe it, believe it.

You, reader, when in England, possibly have often spoken of the “dying Latin peoples,” or the “decadent Latin nations,” or of the “idle Italians,” and so forth and so on: but in Italy it is impossible to pish so. The Italians are neither idle nor dying. They have already within living memory produced many very great men: Garibaldi, Mazzini, Cavour, Lombroso, and others whose names perhaps have not reached so far as the suburbs of London. One day they will produce a great leader, which is indeed their chief need, and he will awaken them. Their present condition only shows how utterly illogical the idea of democracy is, how utterly dependent any unfortunate country in the grip of this disease is on her leaders, those whose first duty it is to dominate the crowd, to put Demos in his place, which is always behind,—he is a good follower, as Italian history, no less than English, will easily prove. Even at moments of high passion it is always the idea of one man that drives the crowd to action, as on that March night in 1848.

Meantime one sees a strange and sad spectacle. In an old book I have read that a house divided against itself cannot stand—if ever there were a house or nation in that sorry condition, you see it when you look on Italy. And there, I think, I touch the root of all the trouble that has made the past thirty-two years less splendid, less happy, than they

should have been. If all Italy has lost faith in her destiny and herself — he who sleeps within the Vatican, a prisoner like Peter, has never doubted his vision or his dream for a single moment. In how much worse a plight have been the former vicegerents of the Prince of Life! The Vatican is not so poor a house for the Church as the Castle of Sant' Angelo with a yelling horde of villains under the Constable de Bourbon (whom Cellini swears he shot) threatening to pull the very world about the ears of Holy Church. And how much better is Rome than Avignon or Gaeta? Doubtless that prisoner dreams, and nobly too. Yet, consider, is it so impossible for Pope and King, Church and Kingdom, to agree? Suppose it is. Then must Italy suffer. And one day, say a thousand years from now, either more or less as you will, the kingdom of Italy crumbles, or whatsoever House is on the Italian throne fails to produce an heir, or Italy like Greece is really a thing of the past, still there is that claimant only waiting the will of God. It may be we have among us sequestered him to America, or even, as we did Napoleon, confined his body to a tiny island, yet that marvellous, miraculous, and stupendous idea that he personifies we can never slay, never in all the countless millions of years in which it may be humanity will still laugh into the face of the sun and be sorry to die; never though all knowledge fail, though the white man has fallen before the Slav and he before the yellow man, and

he again in the inscrutable wisdom and justice of time before some other race; never can we destroy with all our cruelty or our sufferance or our science or our scorn that Church founded upon the Rock, against which our God has promised no gates of hell shall ever prevail, to whom He has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

But is it so impossible for Church and Kingdom to agree? I will never believe it. One day that deliverer will come who will give to his beautiful country the crowning gift of Peace. He will

"Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
That preys upon the heart,"

and Italy once more will forget her childish passions and furies and her suicidal purpose of revenge, remembering her greater past, when the dignity of her Senate struck terror into the heart of the Barbarian and the most precious altars of God were built in the hearts of her children.

Is it not possible that, even as England appears to be willing to sacrifice everything to her principle of Free Trade, so Italy may very easily pay too dearly for her dreams of unity? It is not that that dream is not great and noble, but that in spite of innumerable sacrifices it remains still a dream. Never in the history of the world has there been unity in that old and dear land, though the idea has lifted a whole people towards heroism, and inspired the thoughts of many dreamers. Is it not

possible that, after all, the happiness, the greatness, the character, the history of a people are worth more than a dream which Nature seems to have forbidden reality to claim? To buy unity at the price of destruction and death seems but a silly bargain. And who, knowing Italy to-day, can say with knowledge and honesty that Florence and Naples, for instance, are sister cities, in the same way that Oxford and Bristol or Manchester and Birmingham are. Just as there are centuries of history behind our England circling her with indestructible deeds and thoughts and passions and fights, so there is a longer tale of centuries behind the Italian States sundering them with deeds bloodier and more terrible than any that have welded us together; hatreds that have lived a thousand years, traditions that were born when our Europe was born, distrust that the last fifty years have only served to fan into furious antipathy. Is all this, the unforgettable story of the world, to go for nothing in the hearts of men? Is it so easy to carve out of their souls the things they have heard with their ears, that their fathers have declared unto them of the old time long ago? How many years it took to unite England and Scotland! Yet there are not less but greater reasons for hatred and distrust between North and South in Italy than ever there were between England and Scotland. Yes, and as great a difference in race too, as instinctive a dislike. We are in such a hurry to be rich and great and

powerful that we forget it takes more than a hundred years for the smallest wound to heal. We too, like the Americans, are always out of breath—it is a bad habit.

But if unity is the true ideal for Italy, then I think there are two things necessary to be won before that dream will become bright reality. The first is good government, and the second follows as the night the day—peace with the Vatican. Let the Government convince, not England or Germany alone, but all Italy too, that its idea of rule is not to spoil the people, not to enrich its wretched deputies, not to make grandiose alliances, not to avenge itself upon the Church, but to make its people happy and prosperous, and to train them to use liberty rightly. For the Italians—as, in spite of themselves, one desires to call them—are capable of great happiness beyond anything dreamed of in England since Cromwell came and, having failed in everything else, succeeded in making us sad. There must be no more adventures in Africa, no more bank scandals, no more despoiling of monasteries, no more throwing of nuns into the streets, no more robbery, no more bribery, no more wholesale murder at Ostia and elsewhere, no more cowardice; but there must be Justice, so that the laws shall not be administered in one way to him who can pay and in quite another to him who cannot. Moreover, the Royal House of Savoy must cease to advertise itself by renaming old streets after itself, or

placing wonderful and ridiculous statues of its members in all sorts of unexpected and unsuitable places.

At the present time the Church does far more for Italy than the Government attempts. For while the Government taxes the people within an inch of their lives the clergy are busied in good works.

Meantime the people, of whom no one who knows them dare despair,—nay, rather he who knows them best will believe in them most firmly,—are helping themselves. Everywhere agricultural syndicates and people's banks are appearing, and thus the money-lender Jew, though by no means extirpated, no longer finds an easy prey in the farmer in need of capital. No doubt the State, too, will help more and more, —it is to be believed. Already it is trying with the help of local bodies to prevent malaria, which still claims some 18,000 lives every year. But before all things Peace. Till that is given to Italy by those who govern her, to combat the malaria is but to physic a man for indigestion who is dying of a terrible fever. At present those who are most loving to the Government are least in their allegiance to God. For in Italy, as in Spain, Protestantism is the merest merry-andrew. It has made no impression whatever on the people, nor will it ever do so, save to convince them of the unreasonableness of Religion—a thing patent to every educated man. In Rome, no less than in the other fair cities, to be seen at Mass is as good as to forfeit your position under Government. I do not fear contradiction.

The Italian Government is as hostile to religion as the French is at this time, but less openly for fear of the people. For the Italian, taking him in the main, still looks towards heaven with hope and for other reasons than to admire the stars or to point a jest at Joshua. Somewhere behind his ample and profound sky he knows Christ waits with all His saints, nor does he believe for a moment that he is deserted by them. He will desire the priest to give God's blessing on his crops as he sows his seed, and remembers the old stories of the Gospel and the lives of the Saints. To scoff at Christ is still to his mind blasphemy. So in a world that he loves and makes beautiful, he is perhaps a little behind the times; but the blood of Cæsar's armies is in his veins, it were well not to torture him beyond endurance, nor to anger him more than is necessary.

III.

IL PAPA-RE.

SO soon as we have climbed up to the last Alp, beautiful as though touched with the sword of the archangel, and in some gap among those spectral peaks, moved, perhaps for the first time, to deep emotion, have knelt to gaze down on Italy, we realise that a new land, quite different from any of those we have ever seen before, lies before us. In the mist of early morning, with the sun still low on the horizon, in the devout loneliness of the mountains, as the width of the great plain of Lombardy opens before us, with a glimpse of far-away mountains that we can scarcely persuade ourselves to believe to be the Apennines, we almost imagine that we see cupolas, innumerable towns, and the strong and fair walls of cities, and it is not difficult to believe for a moment that in the pure and nimble air we can see even so far as Rome herself. I think it is some such beautiful and immortal city, built of the desire of the world's heart, that we see when we look towards Rome in reality,

at least from a great distance, as from Tivoli over the Campagna, when the dome of St Peter's is like a ship for ever a-sail in the distance, beneath which the very precious dreams of an awakened world live; and where, in spite of unquenchable laughter, innumerable pilgrims still kneel before one who is a king and in prison.

And being very young, it was thus I came to Rome. I was a very fool, and, as I have told you before, I came afoot. And when at last, after many adventures, many tarryings by the way,—in Avignon, in Frejus, in the rock villages of the Riviera, in my Genoa of the Proud Heart, in white Pisa and Perugia that frowns over the valley of St Francis,—I came toward Rome on that last day, it was, I dare believe, even in the mood of the old-fashioned and reverent pilgrim of old time who had followed in the footsteps of an English king. Yes, and I, too, had shouted “Ecco Roma!” with all my fathers, and crossed the Campagna hurriedly in my eagerness to be in the very city of Rome before another sunset. The first church I saw was St Peter's, and the first house, the prison of the Pope. Yet, at the very moment of my arrival, which should have crowned my journey, a kind of remorse, a horrible regret, came to me for the journey itself now ended. The freedom of the road, the eternal expectation of to-morrow. And, even as I sat resting on the Spanish steps, the bells of the Trinità were ringing the Angelus, and, if you will believe me, there among the tattered

“models,” almost before the bells had finished ringing, I fell asleep.

The prison of the Pope,—well, I thought it finer than the old prison of the first Peter, finer even than Raphael’s dream of it, painted in fresco on the wall of the Stanze—and with a view! But there was no angel of deliverance—yet. Still I will believe, though you will not, the prophecies of St Malachy. A true Irishman was he, with all the gifts of his race and the piety too, Archbishop of Armagh, 1134, in the island of Saints.

In these days, when a great Pope cannot be far from death, in Rome as of old the soothsayers have at least a hearing. Traditions, legends, and apparitions gather like a crowd of vultures round his last years; Centro has seen this, or Monsignor — has heard that, as they sat with his Holiness and smoothed his forehead when it ached. The Blessed Virgin has deigned to comfort him whose last hours no earthly woman may make easy. And always St Malachy is remembered as having named Leo XIII. “*Lumen in cœlo*,” as he named Pius IX. with equal truth “*Crux de Cruce*.” And, indeed, Leo XIII. has been “*Lumen in cœlo*” for the Church.

When Pius IX. died in 1878 and Cardinal Joachim Pecci was elected as Leo XIII., every Government in Europe almost was hostile to the Papacy. In Italy herself Victor Emmanuel, he who had wrested Rome from the hands of Christ, was just dead, and

Humbert by the "grace of God and the will of the people" reigned in his stead. In Germany the conflict regarding public worship known as the *Kultur-Kampf* was at its height, and Bismarck was hostile. In England the Government was busy encouraging the Italian monarchy, then eighteen years old, to establish a national Church on the splendid and successful pattern of the Church of England; in France the anti-clericals, under MM. Dufaure and Waddington, were in power, having caused Marshal MacMahon to resign on the 13th December 1877. It was, too, in 1878 that Gambetta made his speech proposing that theological students should no longer be free from military service. Even Russia had been angered by a protest against her cruel policy in Poland. Indeed the whole world appears to have thought that at length the gates of hell were about to swallow Papacy and Church together.

It was of a kingdom seemingly so despised that Leo XIII. was chosen king. Nor has he in his long reign of twenty-four years ever proved himself anything but a good, great, and wise ruler. That Pius IX. was a saint is most probable; Leo XIII. has, I imagine, no such claim, but has been content to serve God well and truly with the gifts that were given him. So England is no longer quite so hostile. King Edward VII. is the first king of his House of Hanover to receive a Cardinal Prince in state. He, too, like Queen Victoria before him, has sent a special embassy to Rome to congratulate the Pope

in his Jubilee year. But it was in the very year of his election that Pope Leo restored the Hierarchy in Scotland, and soon after composed the difficulty with Bismarck. In 1894 he made his peace with France by recognising the Republic, and although now the French seem bent on shaming their country in the eyes of the world by enforcing the Law of Associations, it is, I think, to Leo XIII. we owe the fact that the Religious Orders are almost welcomed in England, where it is well to forget that it is still "against the law" for a Jesuit to land. In fact, the Vatican is now at peace with all Europe, with all the world save Italy only. And there even Leo's wisdom has found no way for peace. There he has not dared to abate one iota of his demands; there he still regards himself, nor is he alone in his opinion, as the despoiled King of Rome, the Vicar of Christ, now prisoner in the Vatican. And everywhere, and not least in Italy, there has been a wonderful revival of Catholic energy. Innumerable societies, unions, associations, have been formed, each to express some special side or idea contained in the Catholic Church. So we hear of the "Catholic Socialists" in Italy and France and Germany, of the "Christian Democrats" in Italy, of innumerable congresses and reunions, and in Italy, too, of "Rural Unions," "Catholic Agricultural Unions," and "Village Banks." For Leo, who has been called in England the Working-man's Pope, while resolute against socialism in any other form

than that professed by the Catholic Socialists, has really shown a feeling of tenderness even in his policy and in his encyclicals for the poor and the unfortunate. Still, as the Church never for an instant forgets, she is a kingdom, not a democracy. St Malachy prophesied truly when he spoke of Leo XIII. as "Lumen in *cœlo*," for there is no country in the world that has not seen that bright star on his escutcheon and wondered at the immortality of Christ's Church militant here in earth.

But in Rome to-day that light in heaven is setting; everywhere one may hear whispers of the change that is coming. The Pope is ninety-three and very feeble. Even the cheering of the soldiers and the people is too much for him, the triple crown too heavy, the light of the tapers too dazzling. As he draws near heaven, the world, even that beautiful world seen from the windows of the Vatican which is all that Pope Leo has known for twenty-four years, falls away as a thing not to be endured. Only in some marvellous sweet way the name of Jesus is more precious, the robe of Mary a fold of the soft sky.

Meantime, an eager world that is seldom in sufficient silence to think of Death other than as an interesting innovator, can hardly contain its impatience for him who is to come. O cynic Death, who taught us that "a live dog is better than a dead Pope," there are those who call you eloquent in that you have touched the hearts of men, and just because you are indifferent, and mighty because you

will not spare even him who flatters you. Ah, here over the coffin and the old white body of the mightiest king you will draw together all the far-fetched greatness, all the greed, pride, and ambition of men, among which will be found no single soul to weep for Joachim Pecci who is dead.

But in spite of his great and magnificent titles, in spite of the visible significance of the triple crown, the Pope is no king, but the servant of the servants of God. Though the Vicegerent of Christ is a prisoner as his Master was, it is still Jesus, the Prince of Life, safe in His heaven, who is King. And so one sees the utter uselessness of those lies that are believed so eagerly : that the Pope has nominated his successor in his will, as say the wiseacres Peter did, though, none knows better than the Pope, Peter never did ; or that he is about to surrender the temporal power. Nor are these the only rumours that spread through Europe and the world concerning so mysterious a kingdom, for some of the more excitable wiseacres will tell us that Cardinal Rampolla is about to be disgraced on account of the French imbroglio, in spite of the fact that he and he alone has been Leo's Secretary of State since 1878, and that if the present state of religion in France is one of his failures, then the present position of the Papacy in Germany, in Spain, in Austria, in England, is also his success. That he should retire and name Cardinal Ferrata as his successor is, as it were, to suggest that Mr Chamberlain should

resign and name Mr Jesse Collings to reign in his stead, so though the voice were that of Jesse, the words would still, as before, be Joseph's. And to those who watch events with some attention and are not at the mercy of the first wind of rumour that blows from the Quirinal or even from less hostile quarters, it appears certain that should the Pope die to-day or very shortly, his successor would be either Cardinal Serafino Vannutelli or Cardinal Prince Rampolla del Tindaro. Yet there is and always must be a great uncertainty as to the result of any election, for the Pope is elected by a majority and not by the unanimous vote of the Conclave.

The Cardinal Prince Rampolla del Tindaro was born in Sicily. He is of all men the most tactful, ever ready to annihilate himself if thereby he may gain an advantage. In his manner ordinarily he is quiet, yet he is capable of the most majestic emotions. Thus at Mass he surpasses himself, for he is tactful enough to know that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. He is said to have the gift of tears, and though he may forget that he is of the South it is impossible for others to do so. His supreme worth, at least one may suppose in the eyes of Leo XIII., is that he is, or seems to be, content to carry out the ideas of the Pope without leavening them in the process. Thus if it is true that it is in France that the chief, it may be the only, failure of the papal policy is seen, it is Leo's policy, not Rampolla's, that has been unfortunate;

yet Rampolla continues to bear the burden not unwillingly, and it may well be that the chief cause of the failure in France is to be found neither in the policy itself nor in the methods by which it was carried out, but in the unfortunate death of Lavigérie, who was really a great man and not a mere reactionary like Cardinal Langénieux. There is more beneath the struggle in France than appears at first sight, into which it is impossible to enter here. Yet it is perhaps not altogether unworthy to point out that Cardinal Rampolla has made friends of the cardinal monks, whose votes would be, one may believe, not less than twelve. In spite of all this it is not usual for the Secretary of State to become the new Pope, and so after all it may be that Rampolla desires some new post, and is busy getting himself seemingly disgraced in order to mount in the end to the very chair of St Peter. For if St Malachy is to be trusted, the title of the new Pope is to be "Ignis ardens," which some would tell you will suit Rampolla del Tindaro very well.

The prophecies of St Malachy of Armagh, published for the first time in Venice in 1595, by Arnold Wion, a Flemish Benedictine, in his 'Lignum Vitæ,' begin with Celestine II. in 1143, and consist of a roll of one hundred and eleven popes. They have never been looked on seriously by any historian that I know of, yet they are interesting at any rate to the traveller and the passer-by, both because of their extraordinary fulfilment in many instances in

the past, and because they allow of only nine successors to the present Pope. Leo XIII., "Lumen in *cœlo*," is the one hundred and second pope in St Malachy's roll; of these one hundred and two dead popes, St Malachy named Celestine II. (1143-44) "Ex Castro Tiberis"—"From the fortress of the Tiber"—and, as it proved, his name was de Castelli, he had a fortress in his "coat," and he was born in the city of Castello, where the Tiber rises in Umbria.

Again, he named Lucius II. (1144-45) "Inimicus expulsus"—"The enemy chased out"—and the Pope's name was Caccianemico, meaning "chase enemy."

Again, Eugene III. (1145-53), "Ex magnitudine montis"—"From the greatness of a mountain"—he was born in the castle of Grammonte.

Again, Adrian IV., the Englishman (1154-59). "De rure Albo," he called him. Adrian was born at, and was Bishop of, St Alban's.

But it will be said, All these popes lived about the time of St Malachy himself (1095-1148); what proof is there that these are not prophecies after the event? Of course there is no proof. But I will give a few instances of St Malachy's prophetic gift in the names of some of the popes who reigned after the date of the publication of the prophecy by Arnold Wion in 1595; so that whatever one may think of the inspiration of St Malachy,—and there is no necessity to believe in it that ever I heard of, should one pre-

fer to remain incredulous,—it will be seen that it was at any rate manifestly impossible for these prophecies to have been spoken after the event.

Of Innocent XII., who reigned (1691-1700) a hundred years after Wion's publication, St Malachy says, "Rastrum in porta"—"The rake at the door." He was of Rastello (the rake) at the very gates of Naples. Pius VI. (1775-1799), "Peregrinus Apostolicus"—"The apostolic pilgrim" or "wanderer"; he was carried to Siena on his refusal to surrender the temporal power, thence to the Certosa, and thence to Grenoble, and at last to Vallence, where he died.

Pius VII. (1800-23), "Aquila rapax"—"The grasping eagle." When it is remembered that Napoleon Buonaparte was then at the height of his power, and that he brought the Pope to Paris, the interpretation is easy. So we come down to our own day, to Pius IX., "Crux de Cruce"—"The Cross from a cross"—who reigned through all the troublous times of '48, '60, and '70; who saw the temporal power once more stolen from the Church; whose cross came truly from the cross of Savoy, whose device, to be found on every match-box or packet of bad cigarettes, is a cross argent.

I have already spoken of the title of Leo XIII., but there are still nine popes and no more, according to St Malachy, who are to sit on St Peter's throne. First he comes called "Ignis ardens"—"Burning fire," then "Religio depopulata," then "Fides in-

trepida," then "Pastor angelicus," then "Pastor et Nauta," which some believing soul has thought points to an American Pope, then "Flos florum," then "De meditate lunæ," then "De labore solis," then "Gloria Olivæ,"—and so St Malachy says during the last tyranny and persecution the Roman Peter shall feed the sheep. "In persecutio extrema Sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ sedebit Petrus Romanus qui pascet oves in multis tribulationibus quibus transactis, Civitatis Septicollis disuetur, et Judex tremendus judicabit populum."

While claiming that there is no little interest in this ancient Irish prophecy, I do not for a moment suggest that there is any real reason to believe it other than that of the pleasure one may find on a holiday or a pilgrimage in so old and precious a land in the idlest words spoken concerning it by one who loved it well. There are very many of the prophecies to which it seems impossible to find any interpretation. Thus Gregory XVI. (1832-46) is named "De Balneis Etruriæ,"—"From the baths of Tuscany"—but he was a Lombard. Pius VIII. (1829-31) is named "Vir Religiosus"—"A Religious"—but he was nothing of the sort. So it will not do for united Italy or any other enemy of the Papacy to depend too much on St Malachy and his "nine more popes," which by the year 2000 would bring the Papacy to an end.

Founded as it is on most ancient custom, the papal Conclave has in the course of centuries greatly

changed. The election of a Pope was at one time at the hands of the clergy and the people and the soldiers of the city of Rome; it is now at the hands of the College of Cardinals, a body of seventy men, when complete, which is hardly ever the case. The struggle for the independence of the Papal Court, and of the right of election, from any tyranny of emperor or king in Rome or Germany or Byzantium, is certainly as old as the year 483, when the election was forbidden "without the co-operation of the king's plenipotentiary," a decree annulled by a synod of Pope Symacchus in 502.

To-day too, it would seem, we are to witness a like struggle. Certainly in 1878 Crispi managed that the Conclave should be undisturbed, but Italy was not so old then. What guarantee beyond the already broken and evaded "Law of Guarantees" has the Church that in the future she will be permitted by an already jealous and frightened Government to choose her visible Head? None, I think. For in case of disturbance or riot within the city or the kingdom, the Government would undoubtedly seize the opportunity to remove the cause of it. And if that cause were the length of an election or some other similar reason within the Conclave, Italy might think it a fortunate occasion in which to interfere, and maybe elect an antipope herself almost without outside interference if the Powers were already occupied in China or America or elsewhere.

On the death of any Pope all cardinals are summoned to a Conclave to elect a successor, ten days being allowed to go by before the Conclave meets. This practically annuls the votes of any American cardinals, who would find it difficult to come to Rome within the time. It is within these ten days that the funeral of the late Pope takes place, and he is buried temporarily in St Peter's amid innumerable ceremonials, pageants, traditions, glories, and prayers, under the splendid and tremendous phrases of the Church. Surrounded by the inscrutable mystery and faith of the plain chant the old Pope is carried to his temporary resting-place, while in his funeral train surge the vastest ambitions of the world, the passions that have been blowing in the hearts of men for it may be a generation, the greed and envy and despair of all his ministers, the fears or sorrows of his friends, the curiosity of surprised ambassadors, the weak tears of those who weep because of the beauty of the antique words or the magnificence of the rise and fall of the chant, or the splendour of the tapers. Outside, a world waits chiefly expectant. So few to weep, for he was the Father of us all and therefore had no children; so many to follow, for that he was a king and has left a great kingdom and no man knows who will wear his crown.

The Sacred College rules the Church when the pope dies till his successor is elected, and so the Cardinal Camerlengo is for the time the visible Head of the Church. It is from him that the Swiss Guard

will take their orders, and it is for him in case of need they will die.

Of the Conclave itself a very excellent account will be found in ‘John Inglesant,’ by Mr J. H. Short-house, a book that has caught more of the spirit of Italy than any other I know of. It is useless for me to describe again a ceremonial told once for all in so well known a book.

As to Pope Leo XIII., he was born at Carpineti, near Segni in the Volscian Hills, in 1810, and christened Joachim Vincent; he bears the hereditary title of Conte, and comes of a noble family of Siena in Tuscany. Those who have cared to find the old house in the mountains where he was born will remember the portraits of his father and mother, still hanging on the walls. His likeness to his father is extraordinary. Of his face it is impossible to speak. Only those who have seen him will understand me when I say that, like St Dominic, there is a “certain radiance” about him, so that he seems to have been carved from the whitest and most delicate marble, within which some sun is imprisoned but shining.

That it is extremely difficult to decide whether the grievances that he has always stated so openly are really such, or whether a people in its struggle for liberty and unity is justified in robbing both him and the Church, I shall be the first to admit. Nor, I hope, will any one quarrel with me for being of the former opinion. To me it seems clear that the Popes had been practically undisputed masters of Rome for

hundreds of years, that Mazzini and Garibaldi desired not a kingdom but a republic, that for ten years Florence was the very excellent and convenient capital of United Italy. To others these things go for nothing. Their devotion to the undeniably noble desires and passions of the Italian people for unity sweep even justice into that sea of things forgot where the tragedy of our own House of Stuart lies. But if it is right for a mass of men, or the majority of individuals of which a nation is made up, or even an entire people, to rob another people, or an institution, or even a single person, though it be for the good of all concerned ; then it is equally right for a tyrant to rob and imprison his people if it be for their ultimate good. To my own countrymen, to whom nothing that is not practical appeals, this argument goes for nothing. To more thoughtful people, such as the Italians, it is an ever-recurring question. And it is not in Italy alone that it is the supreme quarrel of all, but, as is becoming clearer every day, in every country in the civilised world. May a nation do evil, scout justice, rob, murder, and slay in order that the believed happiness of the crowd may by chance be attained ? For myself I have answered this question in the negative—but I shall not quarrel with you for thinking me a fool.

IV.

THE HOUSE OF SAVOY.

THE murder of King Humbert, a tragedy all the more profound in that he perhaps of all men concerned in the government of his country so little deserved a vengeance so brutal, has perhaps awakened Italy. For his death roused the indignation not of the outer world alone, but of Italy too; even in England one began to read in the better informed and more intelligent newspapers that the Italian Government was greatly to blame, and at last the truth of twenty years seemed almost to have got itself expressed in our old and dear land—viz., that the Government of Italy was unspeakably corrupt, impotent for good, a great wound from which Italy was bleeding to death. During the last twenty years the Government could not have done worse; indeed there is not one single thing in which they have done well; nor can this be gainsaid. I am not concerned to deny that while Italy is anxious to compare herself with the most successful nations, to her own unavoidable discomfort, one should

rather compare her present conditions with her past just before that unification—indeed I am anxious to agree in any such contention. It is in such a comparison that one will find a great encouragement to believe in her future. For if her present state is not so splendid, nor so successful, as that of her neighbours and allies, she is, I firmly believe, at least on the road to a better world than that she has left ; and although the crowd is not perhaps so happy or so free from taxation in Tuscany or Umbria, for instance, as in the old days a hundred years ago, still a great and bright future is now possible to *Italia la Nuova*, that was impossible to the geographical expression that travellers and artists and historians called Italy before 1860. So though it is into an Eldorado of the spirit at least that you will come over the Alps and along the shores of that old and great sea, it is into a very human land, that democracy has as yet had scarcely time to soil with its desire for uniformity. Theft, adultery, and murder flourish as with us. Nor are the mountains as yet scarred with railways, nor quite all of the monasteries turned into barracks. A poor land rich in memories the superficial traveller will remark. It is scarcely the whole truth. There is even a small surplus in the budgets at present ; and there are other things. It is in leaders that Italy is unfortunately still so poor. The House of Savoy has not risen to the occasion. Victor Emmanuel, popular though he was, was a soldier, not a statesman. King

Humbert, lately so foully murdered, had been bewildered since the day of his proclamation ; he was the last man in the world to hold the reins of the Government that was thrust upon him. A good man, with a kind heart, utterly fearless too, he looked on the Chamber of Deputies as the conjuring-box from which his father had his throne.

The ridiculous collection of faddists, anarchists, socialists, irreligious maniacs, and fools that make up that extraordinary camera, he regarded as the nation. Whilst others more bold or credulous than he have believed that God has given them their kingdoms, that they rule by His will, and are to Him accountable, he for his sins, or those of others, knew he ruled “by the will of the people.” He showed, full of faith as he was, almost an emotional interest in his Chamber of Deputies : it is difficult to understand, when we remember that shortly before his murder, in the month of April in the year 1900, the obstruction of public business by the mere noise of that gathering was to be ended by the calling in of the carabineers. In May, after the prorogation and the reassembling of the Chamber, at a suggestion of the suppression of an obstruction which, as an English paper said at the time, “ puts Berlin and Vienna and the simple tactics of Irish members quite in the shade,” the Left rose, seventy of them, and began to sing the Marseillaise and Garibaldi’s Hymn, using “their desks as drums and their fists as drumsticks.” Nor were they content with this,

but began to sing “The Socialist ‘Inno dei Lavoratori,’ a song forbid by law.”

After these shameful and ridiculous tactics had amused a cynical world for long enough, King Humbert dissolved Parliament, instead of going down to the House with a whip, as Herodotus tells us in the beginning of the book of Melpomene the Scythians did when, on returning to their country after ruling for many years in Upper Asia, they found that their slaves had seized their country and their women.

And amid all that vulgar hurly-burly, in all the noise and despair of the place-seeking majority, in all the noise and hatred of the “constitutional Opposition” that under the chivalrous and valiant Signor Giolitti had made common cause with those who shouted treason, there was one man who might have saved the honour and perhaps the soul of his country, but he hesitated—I mean the king. If he was King of Italy—if Italy was his kingdom—why did he not save her from those who were despoiling her? Why did he not come as Odysseus came, and stretch the mighty bow and slay these suitors, the devourers of man’s substance, ere they could completely slay the beautiful land he loved, and at last even himself also, at Monza in the north; or if in the multitude of petty vulgarities that surrounded him, amid the hideous obscenity of modern vandalism, he dared not think of great Odysseus, why did he not recall the splendid words of his own father, Victor

Emmanuel, who in 1849 dissolved his Parliament that had become unruly, and from Moncalieri spoke in words that cut like little whips? “What fruit,” cried he, “have my words obtained? Acts unfriendly to my crown, the idiotic hostility of the Opposition, and encroachments on my prerogative secured to me by law. I will call the Chamber severely to account for its actions. I have promised to save my nation from the tyranny of parties, whatever men they be who lead or compose them. I have fulfilled my oath by dissolving a Parliament that had become impossible.” Why was it King Humbert never spoke words like these to the vile crew of vampires that were sucking his country dry? Can it be that he had forgotten them? or, as he looked from the great windows of the Quirinal down over Rome, and saw far away across the mighty city smouldering in the sunset, the everlasting dome of St Peter’s Church, and the mighty angel over the castle of Sant’ Angelo, did his heart accuse him of the sins of his ancestors of which he had not yet purged himself, and as he remembered that mighty theft, did he fear that the Romans—nay, the whole world—might remember it too, and so fear also his people, who were his accomplices in that immortal crime? What thoughts came to him out of that old city as he gazed over her from his palace on the hill we can never know, but be sure they were not always joyful or inspiring.

So he never dared to save his country, unless by

his terrible death he has shown her the way she is going. He was the first king of his House to fall under the hand of the murderer. And in contemplating the cowardly deed, one is moved more by its significance, at least at this distance of time, than by its tragedy. He was murdered because he was a king after the modern pattern, because he reigned but never ruled. It was his own child killed him—one of those who made him and his father what they were, giving them, not without exacting toll as we have seen, stolen goods. His very chivalry, his gallant courage, his fearlessness, his belief in his people, were the things that led him into danger. There is no honour among thieves, nor could he play his part. After all, the temptation was too great; who could have withstood it, after having listened to the words of Cavour and the marvellous dreams of Mazzini? He, like his ancestors, was a dreamer from the mountains; he should have died with a grey sword in his right hand, not with a trumpery crown in his fingers that he was striving not to break. So with this brittle ring of glass ever in his keeping, he submitted himself, in order to preserve it, to the vile company of atheist Ministers, republican and anarchist deputies, who ended by almost persuading him they were “the country,” to the contamination of all the sharpers of Sicily and the south, to the vulgar conversation of the fraudulent grocers and bankers of the north, and to the insolent tactics of the ad-

venturer. And when he died one was really glad for him. He was a brave man in a terrible situation ; he tried to serve well a herd of swine that he mistook for his subjects. Let us be glad for him, for he is now with his ancestors, and sleeps well.

King Humbert's death was received with extraordinary quietness by the Italian people. Not even the Socialists dared to say a word. There remains the question of his successor. Where King Humbert, good man though he was, failed, will his son succeed ? That it is impossible to say. Victor Emmanuel III. is really, even now after two years of his reign have passed, an unknown quantity. His first speech from the throne was certainly most splendid. Some of his words seemed to have an echo of his grandfather's speech of 1849—since then he has been for the most part silent.

A writer in the 'Saturday Review' for August 4, 1900, ventured to say of him : "As Prince of Naples, he has been a complete enigma, and never perhaps did any nation know so little of its sovereign's heir-apparent. He is known to be an efficient soldier with a turn for strategy ; he is a good shot, a fair horseman, a constant yachtsman ; his hobby is numismatics, and he is a good herald and genealogist. In infancy and boyhood his health was weak, hence perhaps the vague general impression that he is also weak in character. There are those who think he will prove even more of a figurehead than his unfortunate father; and again there are those

who think that he is a ‘dark horse’ and will do strange and great things and even things autocratic.” It may be possible that this enthusiastic athlete and sportsman will prove the deliverer Italy has wished for so long, but I think it were too much to be certain of it as yet. As I have ventured to say in a former chapter, absolutely the first work any really great statesman or king will set himself will be a reconciliation with the Church; that accomplished, there is no knowing to what splendour Italy might not advance. But wanting that internal peace without which no country can for long live, her outlook is dark indeed. It is useless for her to dream of colonial enterprise or of authority and place in the councils of Europe, or even in those of the Triple Alliance, if she is divided in her allegiance within her own borders. It is, then, a man with sufficient imagination, sufficient energy, and sufficient daring Italy needs, and if that man should indeed prove to be her king, then is she twice blest.

And this King Victor Emmanuel III. about whom Europe is so curious, should find in the lives and legends of his ancestors an inspiration to control his will and inform his spirit even to compass such great labours as are so plainly set before him. He is the tenth king of his house, which has given more than one pope to Christendom, has produced saints, warriors, statesmen, and cardinals; and as may also be pointed out, kings too, surnamed the Great, the Peaceful, the Warrior, the Hunter. That he should

add to these names that of King Victor Emmanuel III., the Saviour of his country, would indeed be to fulfil the tradition of his house. When he spoke those brave and fearless words to his first Parliament: "Unabashed and steadfast I ascend the throne, conscious of my rights and of my duties as king. Let Italy have faith in me as I have faith in her destinies, and no human force shall destroy that which with such self-sacrifice my fathers built," can one dare to believe he really meant what he said? Let us try to believe it, for some of them who heard him, knowing so well the state of that beloved land, were not ashamed to weep and to cry to their own hearts, It may be, oh that it might be, that the Master has come!

Since then there has been for the most part silence. Yet it may well be that he is but maturing his plans, or waiting the appointed hour or gathering all his strength, so that his mastery may be only more steadfast in the end. Our age was supposed to have no need of kings so short a time ago, yet where were England without her Crown, or Germany without her Emperor, or Austria without her double Crown, or Spain without her beautiful and fearless Regent? I think, indeed, the age as ever is against sham kings, but against real kings it is not, nor has any age been so since the beginning. Thus Italy, simple of heart, left to the bitter mercies of her professional politicians, is in the position of Andromeda, whom may Perseus her prince rescue with all speed.

Looking on the political life of Italy to-day, one discovers scarcely anything but an almost inextricable confusion. There is no Centre party at Montecitorio, and the Right and the Left have become useless as names for parties so uncertain in their allegiance and in their policy as to be nothing but a mass of independent and inconsistent votes. Instead of Government and Opposition, as in a country so indifferent to ideas as England, one finds, for example, that Di Rudini has a small following, Giolitti the shameless another, Sonnino another, and other demagogues other always small followings. Each of these little cliques is really a political party, with a more or less sound or unsound programme by means of which in most cases it hopes to enrich itself.

As to a Court party, there is no such phenomenon, happily, and it is there that the King's chief power lies. Neither he nor his father have stooped to trick and plot and bribe, and so happily there is no Royalist party. For nowadays in Italy, since the death of that great and profound thinker to whom Italy owes almost all she has of stable government and life, Count Cavour, a politician must satisfy the ridiculous demands of some half-a-dozen parties before he can obtain a majority in this unfortunate Chamber. So that one finds that though one has a majority to-day, to-morrow two or three groups will find themselves offended and will consequently vote against the rest that form with them the Government. What the future has in store it is of course

impossible to say for certain, but it seems to me (I write in all humility and am willing to take correction from others who are better acquainted with Italy than myself) that all these groups will soon be welded into two great parties, the Conservatives and the Socialists.

I speak of the Socialists elsewhere. With all their work and enthusiasm and faith I doubt if they will triumph save for a very short time. It may be they will succeed beyond their expectations and precipitate a revolutionary movement that will border on, if it will not actually achieve, civil war. But from the Conservatives, if they are wise, great things should come. A wise conservatism will be eager to grant real reform where it is needed, and it is needed in many things in Italy; and if, as I hope, the Conservatives will urge the King to make peace with the Vatican, so that the Pope will no longer refuse to allow good Catholics to vote at the elections, their future is certain. It is impossible that the Clerical party can work for long with the Socialists. The Jesuits, who, one is told, place the recovery of the temporal power for the Church first in their programme, may work—and I for one am inclined to believe that others beside the Jesuits did so work at Milan in 1898—with the Socialists so far as to disturb and overthrow the present form of government, for in the end that is the Socialists' aim, but after that they will be compelled to oppose them and fight them for the very mastery of Italy. But

in spite of the prejudice felt, for the most part abroad, against the Clericals, they are in touch with the people and they are, if only for their own sakes, eager for reform. A great and splendid party might be formed from the Conservatives and the Clericals, if they could produce a leader. And the King might find in it the very instrument he needs to begin the work of organisation and reformation that must be done, and done without much more delay.

It would be a bright day for Italy should the King be able to say---

“The wind that swells my sails
Propels ; but I am helmsman.”

As things are now one sees the shameful spectacle of men sacrificing their country in order to line their own pockets or to realise their own ambitions. Something has been done, not much, but one must make the most of it, and hope it is only a pledge of future good work. An Employers' Liability Act has been given to the people, and what Signor Villari, an excellent judge, calls “an incomplete Old Age Pensions Act.”

But in all this sordid business one figure stands out unsullied by party strife or bank scandal, or misfortune—I mean the King. After all, he is Italy's forlorn hope. In his youth still, with all his energy unimpaired, married to a princess of ancient and strong race, who may well be to him the great encourager, it is to him Italy turns in her need,

unheeding in her profound expectation the ranting of demagogues and the snarling of fools. Will he rescue her from her danger and set her feet upon the rock, will he dare to venture so far as to make peace with the Pope, and forgetting the late years of passion, remember the deeds of his fathers and do a great deed to save a great people from ruin, and be ashamed to be a figurehead, for that he is indeed a king?

V.

THE SOCIALISTS.

IT is very possible that the immediate future of Italy is in the hands of the Socialists, and, as I believe, it is certain that this is the case unless the King can bring himself to make peace with the Vatican. This, to my mind, is a pity, chiefly because though Socialism may triumph for a time, it will inevitably fail to satisfy Italian ambition, and because many useful and splendid things must fall to build its very foundations, among which is the new kingdom Italy possessed herself of at such great cost so short a time ago. It is not that one has any ridiculous dislike for Socialism as a theory, but that even as a theory one profoundly distrusts its very postulates and axioms. And coming to close quarters with its special manifestation of itself in Italy, one finds that it proposes to deal with perhaps the most individualist people in Europe as though they were as capable of combined thought and action as are the French or even the Germans. It needs but little reflection to enable one to see how very much easier, had they

been so, the unification of Italy would have been to accomplish, instead of the almost impossible task it has proved. Yet after one has satisfied himself of the inevitable failure of Socialism in the end to bring happiness to this land, he has to acknowledge its gift of faith in itself and in its mission, a gift that every other political party is without; but lacking it, how can they hope to accomplish anything. It is indeed one of the most valuable emotions that the Clericals would bring to the Conservatives, if ever there might be peace, in which case I think Socialism would be defeated almost before the inevitable battle. But at present Socialism alone seems to have faith in its politics—nor does it hesitate to promise great things, nor is it slow to convince the Italians that it has happiness and prosperity to give.

The “minimum programme” of the Socialists is somewhat as follows: First, universal suffrage; a dangerous gift when one remembers that, so late as 1896, more than thirty-six males even in every hundred could not read. But the Socialist idea of universal suffrage is to include both men and women, so that the percentage of illiterates would be much higher. Second, the Socialists place the Referendum, a proposal open to the same objection. Third, the payment of members of Parliament and municipal councillors, a proposal which, considering the already immense number of professional politicians, mountebanks who earn their living out of politics by all sorts of extraordinary ways and startling contrivance, is, I

think, scarcely to be desired, since it would inevitably increase this army of vultures. Fourth, complete liberty of the press, freedom of speech and public meeting—a proposal which probably a wise conservatism would be anxious to agree to if not to propose, but one that the Socialists have not practised in the past and would possibly be compelled to forget in the future. Fifth, an eight hours' day and minimum wage. Sixth, the abolition of conscription and the substitution of an army on the pattern of the Swiss Militia—a wise proposal, I think. Seventh, a progressive income-tax, also a wise and unobjectionable idea. But, as Signor Villari has recently pointed out, this cannot be all. When King Humbert passed through Milan on his way to death, the Socialist municipality refused to greet him; after the murder they refused to take any part whatsoever in the commemoration. "In June 1901," says the same writer, "the Socialist leaders, especially Signor Ferri, made speech after speech in Parliament in which they declared themselves unequivocally hostile to the Monarchy as one of the chief obstacles in the way of the realisation of their objects." Just there, I think, lies the real danger; for if it is difficult to hold Italy together under a king, it will be impossible to do so under a republic; especially with the ever-present claim of the Papacy to temporal power, which would be much more hopeful under a republic than under a king, because a republic, as in France has been proved over and over again, is always more

subject to attack, more sensitive of a passing fury or dissatisfaction, than a kingdom.

It was the wisdom of Cavour that made the magnificent dreams of Mazzini and Garibaldi reality. How would a republic have been able to withstand the defeat at Adowa or the bank scandals ? It was the knowledge that the King, outside and above party government as he is, had no hand in all that villainy, was as innocent of it as the mass of his people, for whom he truly stands, that held Italy back from some frightful revolution. A republic could never have stood so utterly beyond the suspicion of even the most hostile as the King did, for the very men who were most concerned would inevitably have been the very republic herself.

But in writing of Socialism in Italy it is in regard to the land that its plans are most far reaching. In Sicily, where I was last winter, I saw the most appalling misery that I have ever witnessed in any land. The peasantry were in reality starving, the landlord possibly an absentee in possession of the land that the peasants at least believed was by right their own. It is there that this side of the Socialist programme has most readily found acceptance. For though the Socialist will tell you that he does not aim at a forced division of property, the people believe he does ; and should the Socialist obtain the government, it is what the people believe is his idea, and not what it might once have been, that will of necessity happen. The peasant wants naturally to be a landlord, because

he thinks that the landlord is a great man, who can have everything it is possible to wish for, who never felt hungry in his life, and to whom everybody is respectful. So individualist is he that any idea of the nationalisation of land is beyond him. What he chiefly desires is to be a landowner himself, with tenants and retainers of his own to whom he can in his turn be a tyrant and indifferent. I firmly believe that were it possible so to nationalise property to-morrow as to give the right to cultivate a certain number of acres to each peasant, he would still feel aggrieved that he had not some one to whom he might appear hateful and to be envied. That desire for glory, for display, is in the very marrow of the bones of the Neapolitans and Sicilians. To be happy is not enough, they must also be envied. It is true that in the north—in Tuscany, for instance, which has had the advantage of fair government for a long time now—there is less discontent and there is less misery. This is not altogether owing to the system of partnership between landlord and peasant that obtains there, but is in part at least due to a real difference in character. Socialism can make but little headway in Tuscany outside the cities. I am not anxious to deny that the Tuscany peasant is far happier and better off than the southerner,—he is, on the contrary, very much better off; but also he is of a different character, a stronger race, and furnishes, I think, the finest specimen of an Italian to be found to-day; indeed

there are few finer races in the world than the Tuscan.

But it is in the north that Socialism has been most successful; in Milan, which sends three Socialists to Montecitorio, thus returning a Socialist for half of her constituencies. This is partly explained by the misery of a large proportion of the artisan class—that is, the peasantry of a large city. The riots of 1898 will prove to any one who cares to examine the matter with fairness the enormous extent of that misery. It is there in Milan that the Christian democrats have a stronghold. It was probably this fact which led to the suspicion of the Church as having helped to cause the riot of 1898. There were undoubtedly hundreds of priests who sympathised with the people. I doubt, however, that they would advise or countenance riot. If they did so, which has never been proven, they did so absolutely without authority save that of their own judgment, which in political matters it is difficult to underestimate. But it is on the whole an excellent sign that a party owing supreme allegiance to the Holy See should mix to some extent with the Socialists, for they will help to leaven that very various lump, giving it something of their own high-mindedness and reverence, without which it would be more dangerous than it is.

It is curious that wherever Socialism manifests itself—and where does it not?—it is always as champion of the lower class against the upper class, the uneducated against the educated, and never as

the champion of humanity as a whole. In this it differs from Anarchism only in its mode of attack, for the latter disease would have humanity commit suicide, while the former philosophy suggests that humanity shall perish utterly in a fight between rich and poor. Their method of propagating an idea in itself noble and Christian may be to blame for my conclusion; for it is always the rich man who is the enemy, not for any fault of his own, but because he is rich. So to the Italians, who are eager listeners to any sort of philosophy, it appears that he who owns a factory is the natural enemy of him he employs; he who has a house is the oppressor of him who has none; he who has food is the murderer of him who has died of starvation. And so the Italian sees the human nature of such an argument, and is not dismayed when he is told in an apologetic way by the householder or the manufacturer that it really is not his fault, but that obviously he would be a fool to give up his factory or his house to the many houseless ones, because then even he himself would be houseless too. But if, on the other hand, the Socialist desires nothing so much as brotherly love among men, and is not anxious, should he see a chance, to appeal to physical force which might enable him to seize the goods of those he calls bourgeoisie, then how is one to account not only for the bread riots, but also for the many extraordinary speeches and pamphlets that are written by well-known men up and down Italy? Thus one finds that in Italy Socialism

is really at the mercy of its ideas, and also at the mercy of the ideas it creates in the mind of the crowd. In a country so phlegmatic, so indifferent, so difficult to rouse as England, Socialism really has a better chance of fulfilling its mission ; in Italy it can only exist by stirring up the passions of man, so easily aroused, and in the end being captured by them.

I do not for one moment seek to deny that Socialism in Italy was created by the pressing need of reform, but I am inclined to deny that Socialism can ever really do any lasting good to Italy. Already one sees that fatal cancer, Opportunism, eating into the Socialist as into every other political party in Italy, so that one finds it also willing to sacrifice something, some principle, in order to gain an advantage in Parliament or in the country. It is not by pointing out the horrible indifference of the rich to the poor, nor by calling the stupid middle class shopkeeper a murderer, that Italy will be bettered or will find peace, for in the end that idea can only succeed in destroying society utterly ; but in patiently teaching the people how to help themselves, how to better themselves, so that in the end they may be worthy indeed of those things as yet denied them not altogether through the fault of others. It is so easy to preach patience, so difficult to practise it. Yet I believe with all my heart that patience is still the mightiest weapon that those who really desire the good of this country can use. Thirty,

forty years are such a long time for a man to wait to see the fulfilment of his dreams, but in the life of a nation they are but a moment. The waiting is long and terrible that is necessary for the realisation of any very precious thing, but the character of a nation is tried and proved by such agony. Let Italy take heart: oh, I speak not as one who is nothing moved by her sorrows and her pain, but as one who would do much to help her, all he could do, and indeed I believe the greatest need at this time is patience and a great faith in herself and in her King.

And in these long years of waiting it is the greatest misfortune that the Pope has felt obliged to forbid Catholics to vote at the parliamentary elections. Thus many of the most orderly and sane Italians are compelled to remain out of political life altogether. It is to be hoped and believed that before long, perhaps even at the next election, he will be able to repeal this law, that only gives greater power to his bitterest enemies.

But it is really not so much in politics of any sort, save those that shall bring peace with the Church, that the salvation of this land, so splendid in everything but the fortunes of her people, lies, but in work both industrial and agricultural. Let the Socialists forget their passions and put away all hatred and remember only their love for their country and their fellow-men, and in the greatness of their power let them devote all their energies to the development

of agriculture and the industries of the north. Though Italy is not naturally a very rich country, she is richer than she appears to be to-day. For if the Socialists are honest, as I for one believe them to be, they desire before all things the happiness and welfare of their country, which they will find lies not in hatred but in charity, not in jealousy but in trust, not in selfishness but in self-sacrifice.

But I must end as I began, it is to them probably the immediate future is given: we who are but passers-by after all, in spite of all our love, can do little but hope that if they have the power put into their hands they will realise their responsibility and use it well.

It is not to be thought of even for a moment that all those great and splendid dreamers dreamed but in vain, that all those heroes who marched under the ragged banners of Garibaldi died in vain; that vanity should be the end of her of whom all men dream when they are children and hear for the first time the name of Cæsar, when they are in the flush of youth and read of love in Horace, when they are men and come to her and find her beautiful and fairer than the fairest, when they are old and still, by the winter fire in England, or some other land, turn softly the page of Virgil, oh, it is not to be thought of. For her men have yearned in the dark cities for a lifetime, under her sky men have believed in lovely things, on leaving her men have wept as for a dear mistress, to her the world will turn when

beauty has fled in terror from elsewhere, at her call
ever swords shall flash, at her name eyes blaze with
love, for her fame is everlasting and her beauty im-
maculate in the hands of the immortal dead to whom
she was very precious.

VI.

LITERATURE.

I.

ITALIAN literature, that has in the past produced so many great and magnificent masterpieces, that numbers among its many glorious names not a few that are immortal, that is the eldest daughter of the Latin tongue, is to-day like one newly risen from the dead. Still pale and but half alive after the long sojourn underground, she promises us at the least, in this her new youth, great things about to be accomplished. And looking back on Italian literature proper of the last thirty years, four names stand out from the innumerable crowd of philosophers, political writers, pamphleteers, and revolutionaries—namely, Carducci, Verga, Fogazzaro, and D'Annunzio, and the greatest of these is D'Annunzio.

It is only with the present age of letters in Italy that we must concern ourselves, pleasant and profitable as it would doubtless be to examine some-

what minutely the more or less distant past. We are but travellers after all; it is the impression of the living moment that we seek for so laboriously, betraying it, having snared it carefully, to captivity.

And as in all other countries that have subjected themselves to European culture and civilisation, so in Italy we find chaos—Art, Beauty, Letters, fettered and derided by the crowd, that is already licking the plebeian feet of its millionaires. All rules and standards of faith, of morals, and of taste, have been overthrown by the crowd which found them irksome; no canon of literature or art exists which is acknowledged by the anarchists who call themselves a people, or by the particular class of cocks and cockerels who call themselves men of letters. So one finds that not only is the existence of God doubted as of old by fools, but that the merits of the great masters of literature and art are either openly denied or simply disregarded. And even as God is safe in His heaven, nor shall the crowing of ten million cocks distract Him for a moment from His meditation, so in spite of the laughter and ignorance of the crowd the great masters remain immortal and inviolate, guarding the way to Parnassus. Having decided to forget and forego the Past, it has been found necessary to invent some ideal, some standard of achievement at which this magnificent new democracy may aim in matters of art—so Truth, Reality, was born quietly in a brothel,

the ugly daughter of an actor and a harlot, and ever since democracy has been trying to kiss her exaggerated lips and to look into her bloodshot and lying eyes.

This triumph of democracy over art has not, however, succeeded in effacing individual talent or genius. It is true that no great and classical production seems possible, but the frequently erratic imperfect work of individual writers is met with that merits our attention. Literature in Italy to-day resembles politics in that land, in that it is confused by reason of its own liberty and licence.

First in point of time, though it may be not in merit, stands Giosuè Carducci, who has contrived to express the romantic desire for liberty and unity that is or was a characteristic of the Italian peoples. The son of a physician, he was born at the village of Valdicastello, between Spezia and Pisa, in July 1836. In 1849 he with his father went to Florence, where he entered the Scuole Pie, and began his studies that were continued at the University of Pisa. His first volume, ‘Rime,’ was published in 1857, while he was a private tutor in Florence, where he also wrote for the reviews. There, too, he became part editor of ‘Il Poliziano,’ a review devoted to the cause of Classicism as opposed to Romanticism. In 1860 he appears to have gone to Bologna, where he has lived ever since, being at one time Professor of Literature in the University there. In 1865 appeared his famous “Inno a Satana”—“Hymn to Satan”—in which he

appears to look to Satan as a kind of Messiah more genuine than Il Gesù Cristo; as, indeed, the incarnate spirit of Liberty.

“Salute O Satana,
O Ribellione,
O forza vindice,
Della ragione,
Sacri a te salgano
Gl’ incensi e i voti !
Hai vinto il Giova
De’ sacerdoti,”

and suchlike youthfulness, very common even in England in the middle of the nineteenth century, that it is scarcely necessary to translate. Mr G. A. Greene, from whose book, ‘Italian Lyrists of To-Day,’ I have borrowed the graceful translations given in this chapter, says of this poem, “I do not, even for all its brilliancy, consider it truly representative of Carducci’s genius, and with respect to its form this appears to be the poet’s own maturest judgment upon the youthful outburst which made him famous.” He published poems from 1860 to 1870, which have been collected in ‘Decennalia,’ and ‘New Poems’ in 1873. In 1877 he published the ‘Odi Barbare,’ Italian poems in the old classical metres which created much criticism on style in modern verse. An example from this volume, translated by Mr G. A. Greene, will not be out of place.

IN THE SQUARE OF SAN PETRONIO AT BOLOGNA ON A
WINTER'S EVENING.

“Rises in frost of winter, gloomy and towered Bologna,
While the mountain above smiles in the glimmer of snow.
This is the tranquil hour when the sun that is dying saluteth
Towers and fane to thee, sainted Petronius, raised.
Towers whose summits were touched by wings of the ages that
vanished,
And of the solemn fane, pinnacles lofty and lone.
Cold adamantine, the heavens are agleam with dazzling splen-
dour ;
All the air like a veil, silver, diaphanous lies
Over the forum lightly blending with colour the masses
Dark, which the weaponed hand once of our ancestors built.
Up on the lofty heights the sun as it sinketh, delaying,
Pierces with languid smile violet mists of the night,
Which in the old grey stone, in the dusky vermillion brickwork,
Seems to waken anew souls of the ages that passed,
So that a mournful desire in the frosty air is awakened—
Ah ! for the roseate May's, warm in the perfume of eve,
When the beautiful maidens danced in the open places,
And with the conquered kings triumphing consuls returned.
So do the joyful Muses turn to the resonant metre
Trembling with vain desire, seeking the beauty antique.”

In ‘I Critici Italiani e La Metrica delle Odi Barbare’ Chiarini defends very ably Carducci’s use of the classical metres, yet it may be doubted whether any modern language can support the magnificence and weight of the hexameter, for instance, with dignity. In English, Mr Swinburne and Mr William Watson may be said to have succeeded, perhaps—the latter in one poem “The Hymn to the Sea”—while Clough and a host of others fail. We can

never be sufficiently thankful that Spenser decided against this metre for his "Faerie Queene," in spite of the efforts of Abraham Fraunce, whose "Emmanuel" is perhaps the most charming antique example of the use of the hexameter in English verse. But it is, as I think, in the Sapphic metre rather than in the Horatian or the hexameter that Carducci has been most successful. The following translation, in Sapphics, may help the reader who knows not Italian to understand something of Carducci's verse:—

ON MONTE MARIO.

"Cypresses solemn stand on Monte Mario,
 Luminous, quiet is the air around them,
 They watch the Tiber through the misty meadows
 Wandering voiceless.

They gaze beneath them where, a silent city,
 Rome lies extended : like a giant shepherd,
 O'er flocks unnumbered vigilant and watchful
 Rises St Peter's.

Friends, on the summit of the sunlit mountain
 Mix we the white wine scintillating brightly
 In mirrored sunshine ; smile, O lovely maidens !
 Death comes to-morrow.

Lalage, touch not in the scented copses
 The boasted laurel that is called eternal,
 Lest it should lose there in thy chestnut tresses
 Half of its splendour.

Between the verses pensively arising
 Mine be the laughter of the joyous vintage
 And mine the rosebuds fugitive, in winter
 Flowering to perish.

We die to-morrow, as the lost and loved ones
 Yesterday perished ; out of all men's memories
 And all men's loving, shadow-like and fleeting
 We too shall vanish.

Yes, we must die, friends ; and the earth, unceasing
 Still in its labour, round the sun revolving
 Shall every instant send our lives in thousand
 Sparks evanescent ;

Lives which in new loves passionate shall quiver,
 Lives which in new wars conquering shall triumph,
 And unto Gods new sing in grander chorus
 Hymns to the future.

Nations unborn yet, in whose hands the beacon
 Shall blaze resplendent, which from ours has fallen,
 Ye too shall vanish, luminous battalions
 Into the endless.

Farewell thou mother, Earth, of my brief musings
 And of my spirit fugitive ! How much thou
 Æons-long whirling round the sun shalt carry
 Glory and sorrow !

Till the day comes, when, on the chilled equator,
 Following vainly heat that is expiring
 Of man's exhausted race survive one only
 Man and one woman.

Who stand forsaken on the ruined mountains
 Mid the dead forests, pale with glassy eyeballs
 Watching the sun's orb o'er the fearful ice-fields
 Sink for the last time."

Probably the best example in English of the Sapphic metre so-called—though it is improbable that Sappho invented it—is to be found in Mr Swinburne's poem “Sapphics”:

“All the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,
Shed not dew, nor shock nor unclosed a feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron
Stood and beheld me.”

But in spite of this desire for manner, for classicism, Carducci is very far from being all form and no subject, if indeed that was ever attained by any writer that ever lived. His “sense” is extremely clear and weighty.

In 1896, at the University of Bologna, the jubilee of his professorship was celebrated. In life he has been almost as successful as in art: entering politics as an extreme Radical, he is now a senator, and, we may believe, a loyal subject of King Victor Emmanuel. He is of course an anti-clerical, as his “Hymn to Satan” assures us. He appears but for one exception to dominate modern Italian verse, but the exception, D'Annunzio, beginning as Carducci's disciple, has far outsoared his master not only in thought but in the art of poetry. Of him, however, I treat more fully in a separate section, as being of all modern Italian writers the only one who has attained European fame. Carducci's poems have been translated by Mr F. Sewall, and were published in New York in 1891. Mr G. A. Greene, in his ‘Italian Lyrists of To-Day’ (John Lane,

London, 1893), already referred to, has translated a number of his pieces very delightfully.

Giovanni Verga, born at Catania in Sicily in 1840, is known all over the world as the author of the libretto of "Cavalleria Rusticana." He is of the same school as Emile Zola, with this difference, that, unlike the Frenchman, he is intensely local—as local, for instance, as Thomas Hardy; and as Hardy seldom or never leaves Wessex, so Verga never leaves Sicily, which he views with that "inward eye" from Milan where he lives. A novelist of the most desperate industry, he is continually producing documents that are, I imagine, in the eyes of the scientist utterly untrustworthy, but that he vaguely believes may bring him immortality as social history. Perhaps his wish may be fulfilled, in spite of the scientists.

The minor poets—some of them true poets though of small volume—at present writing in Italy are innumerable. Mr G. A. Greene finds thirty-two worthy of translation beside Carducci and D'Annunzio. Of these perhaps the most widely-known writer—though scarcely as a poet—is Antonio Fogazzaro, who in the opinion of many is the greatest novelist at present writing in Italy, for to a host of people D'Annunzio is anathema. Fogazzaro has been called the poet of hope and faith, but it is chiefly as a novelist that he is famous, though to the English public he is accessible only in his 'Malombra,' translated by Mr F. T. Dickson, published by Fisher Unwin, 1896; and 'Daniele Cortis,' translated by Mr S. L. Simeon,

and published in 1890. These two books are, however, not the best examples of his work. It is in such books as ‘*Il Piccolo Mondo Antico*’ and ‘*Il Piccolo Mondo Moderno*’ that he proves himself to be a really fine artist, avoiding what Messrs Bolton King and Okey call his “tendency to preach,” though certainly an Englishman would not easily find such a tendency in ‘*Malombra*.’ He was born at Vicenza in 1842, and published his first work, ‘*Miranda*,’ a kind of romance in verse, in 1874.

His recent work, ‘*Il Piccolo Mondo Moderno*,’ is, in my opinion, far finer than anything else he has done. ‘*Il Piccolo Mondo Antico*,’ the book that came immediately before it, is almost a masterpiece —the later work is really so. It is concerned with the life and temptations of one Piero Maironi. In the end Maironi enters a monastery, under what Rule we are not told. Fogazzaro will, I feel sure, yet prove himself a greater writer than the world imagines him. He perhaps needs a little reticence —a lack of which in D’Annunzio has almost prevented the English from reading him. But he can give us real men and women, who have nothing in common with the creatures of the realists; his psychology is subtle, but one does not think of his characters from the scientific but rather from the artistic point of view.

Guerrini, Ada Negri, Rapisardi, and Ersilio Bicci are four lyrical poets of fine achievement, though not in the first rank. Guerrini began as an erotic poet

of the most finished kind, and has developed a love for political verse, which, in its way, is most excellent. Ada Negri, of whom report speaks as one of those utterly natural spirits to be met with perhaps in our day only in Italy, has sung the despair and hopelessness of the poor of Lombardy, the poor, who at least in the north are awaking from their lethargy. It is possible she may accomplish much. Rapisardi, the Sicilian, born in 1843 at Catania, as was Giovanni Verga, is the antagonist of Carducci, an anti-Christian and a Socialist: he appears to have been overcome by humanity, and in the struggle his art has suffered. ‘Giobbe,’ one of his most famous works, published in 1884, which was ridiculed especially by Guerrini, is in many respects a fine work spoiled by the poet’s enthusiasm for his fellow-men. Ersilio Bicci, born in 1845 in Tuscany, is another of Carducci’s opponents. A poet of great simplicity, he writes so that he may be understood of the people—a rather hopeless task for a poet, one may believe. A very delightful translation of one of his poems I give below from Mr G. A. Greene’s book.

CONTEMPT.

“When I pass singing, singing on my way,
I think not, dream not, of her—not indeed!
Burns she with jealousy? Well, well, she may;
I mind my own affairs, and give no heed.
If in my song she fancy that she hears
Some note of sadness or some trace of tears,

It is my whim—not that my heart is sore !
For as to that I care for her no more.
And if they say I drive the cynic's trade,
It is Time's fault, not hers who love betrayed ;
Or that I call on Death where'er I rove,
What matters that to her? Am I her love?
But if I meet her with Luigi, know
She to her grave—I to the gallows go.

Edmondo De Amicis, born near Genoa in 1846, was educated for the army. In 1867 he began to write his interesting ‘Bozzetti della Vita Militare,’ which brought him fame and fortune. He has written many books of travel, on Spain, Constantinople, and Holland. His latest book (1902), ‘Un Salotto Fiorentino del Secolo Scorso,’ is an exception to his work as a rule, in that it is dull and disappointing. He is undoubtedly one of the most popular writers in the peninsula.

Of Pasquale Villari, the really fine historian; of Lanciani and Rossi, the famous archæologists; of Lombroso, the criminologist and psychologist, and other specialists as it were in literature and science, it is impossible for me to speak. After all, literature with them is a secondary thing. But Lanciani, at least, is a writer of fine and clear style, whom it is well worth the while of the traveller to read, especially if he be interested in classic Italy.

Literature proper is in a condition of drowsiness. It might almost be said that there are but two writers of importance in Italy, Carducci and D'Annunzio,

and one of them grows old. Yet with such achievement as theirs before her, Italy can never dare to despair of her future.

Matilde Serao, by far the greatest writer of all Italian women, has undoubtedly attained to something of a European fame. Two of her books, ‘Fantasy’ and ‘Farewell Love,’ were translated into English so long ago as 1891 and 1896, and were published by Mr Heinemann in his “International Library.” It is, however, in her later work that Matilde Serao is most fortunate. ‘Suor Giovanna della Croce,’ perhaps the most pitiful book that modern Italy has produced, is the story of a nun whose convent has been suppressed by the Government, and who is literally thrown into the streets. It will shortly appear in English,—indeed a uniform edition of Signora Serao’s work is in course of publication by Mr Heinemann. In ‘The Land of Cockayne’ she treats of the lottery system, that benefits the Government so largely and depraves the people. In ‘The Ballet-Dancer’ one finds, as indeed in most of her work, a kind of realism often painful, perhaps seldom really worthy of the name of Art, but very honest and earnest. She is, as I think, not verily of the realist school, for all her work is redeemed by a kind of poetical emotion that is, however, not strong enough wholly to redeem it, and yet is by no means a mere sentimentality. She thinks too deeply ever to be captured by mere sentiment. ‘Il Paese di Gesù’ is, while less exquisite

by far than Pierre Loti's 'Palestine,' perhaps more in sympathy with the religion of the Church and of Christ. In 'La Madonna e i Santi,' published in 1902, she is how far! from the early romances with which she made her success. Something exquisite has come into her life, as it were: often a writer of vision, it is as though she had suddenly for the first time seen the sun, and the whole world had been changed for her. It is certain that the writer of 'Suor Giovanna' is capable of much, but the writer of 'La Madonna' seems to promise us something more and something very different.

II. GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO.

Born in the year 1863 in the old walled town of Pescara, Gabriele D'Annunzio is at the age of thirty-eight famous throughout Europe, chiefly by means of the influence of the great French critic the Vicomte de Vogüé, who, as is well known, welcomed him as the angel of the Latin Renaissance. And perhaps it is by reason of this splendid annunciation, rather than by the power of his own genius, hidden or obscured, at least to the majority of mankind, by the general ignorance of so antique a language as Italian, that the world has received him so readily, and set him too among its gods. For though it is in vain that we should deny his genius, for it is incontestable; it is strange that he is welcomed, everywhere almost,

more readily than he is in Italy, seeing that it is really only the Italian who reads him in his own words.

Profound, in the strict sense of the word, never, as is almost a matter of course in modern English literature, without ideas, he is at one and the same time a Mystic and a Realist. Taking the side neither of the Angels nor of the Devils, he is even scornful of Man, a passion for whom has led to some of the great indiscretions in literature. A Mystic, he is never far from reality; a Realist, he is almost always a poet, consumed, it would seem, even when in the close embrace of the actual world, with a lust for the beauty of mere words, desiring, almost before anything beside, the emotion of their flight and sweep and glory and terror. And in the quest for this beauty he has searched all lands and ransacked the fields of Cadmus and the burial-places of the Atridæ. Nor is he without the words and the grave serious accents of the sensualist, possessed by the hallucination of Desire, in which madness he, like all in the grip of that Demon, is minute, dreary, infinitely infinitesimal.

His terror he has from the Greeks, and his sensuality, obscenity, and passion from his own land; his realism from France and Russia, and his mysticism from Germany and Belgium and the profound Saints of the Catholic Church. It is only from us he has learnt nothing or next to nothing, at least till lately, finding perhaps in the plays of Shakespeare, or the

writings of one or two moderns, something less lengthy, less full of useless words and pages that might have been left out, than in the writings of Zola or the works of Tolstoi or the operas of Richard Wagner, and that may, one is not slow to think, be of use to him at least by way of example.

It is well to remember in reading D'Annunzio that he wrote verse before ever he wrote prose, and not verse only but poetry. Chiarini, the critic, welcomed him as early as 1880, when his 'Primo Vere' was published, seeing in him perhaps another jewel for Italy's new crown, till later he found, as he supposed, nothing but "desire"; and as Jowett said of Swinburne, so Chiarini may have said of D'Annunzio, "A brilliant youth! Too brilliant a youth! It's all youth!" For even in those days D'Annunzio was chiefly an artist in himself, exploiting his own soul, and mind, and physical presentment in his work; so that behind the puppets, be they never so living, happy, or sad, one sees Gabriele D'Annunzio smiling, with not quite truthful or unenigmatic brows. And so among his other delightful, splendid, or shameful poses there is almost before all that famous name—for Gabriel of the Annunciation has not so sweet a Prince's name after all, but is just Signor Rapagnetta in a world that as yet he has taught to smile for no other cause. In his first work in prose, 'Libro delle Virgine,' one finds almost nothing of the Gabriele D'Annunzio of to-day. The strength and beauty of the 'Trionfo' are not there, and even the very prose itself is almost



Photo by Vinari Brothers.

THE CREATION OF MAN.
By Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel, Rome,

sacrificed to a desire not for reality but for realism; and it is only when dealing with exterior things that he contrives to make a peace, broken over and over again with a beauty without which, however, he is never quite himself.

In considering his Novels first, and his Poetry and Plays afterwards, I deal with him as the world deals, treating him as chiefly a writer of Prose. But in reading his novels it is before all things necessary to remember that the works of D'Annunzio are scarcely novels at all in our sense of the word. It is characteristic of the English novel that, apart from every other form of literature, it alone is indifferent to words, concerning itself chiefly with a tale of love or crime, interesting us not by its Prose but by its inherent Romance or Realism. It is indeed to the rest of literature—to poetry, for example, in its pre-occupation with form—what the photograph is to the work of the painter, appealing to us not by any beauty of its own, but by a kind of familiarity, as who should say, I recognise that person or event, so and not otherwise such or such an occurrence must have happened. In other words, the English novelist is not to-day concerned with art or literature at all, he is merely anxious to interest a certain number of people in the tale he is telling; and because for the majority style or the art of words merely serves to confuse the story, he, wisely no doubt and happily for himself, discards any attempt at beauty of sentence or choice of words,

and sets himself to tell a plain tale as lengthily as he can.

It is, so D'Annunzio seems to tell us, and not D'Annunzio alone, the interior life unsuspected by the majority breathing there so quietly, that shall quicken imaginative art. The adventures of the soul with itself—it is just there we encounter the eternal in human nature as we never do in the exterior world. Nor, as one can see in D'Annunzio's work, will imaginative art stop short of Truth itself. For it is not realism, nor even reality, for which we seek, but Beauty. And in this interior castle there can be no lying. In that quiet profound life where one realises perhaps for the first time that mankind was made after one image, it may be indeed as our fathers have told us in the image of God, no noise of argument or contradiction can come; one finds the assurance of music there, the certainty of life. But there is no country of the spirit that does not include as part of its kingdom a sensuous or even sensual region also. It is not in dreamland, be sure, that the world of D'Annunzio lies, but in a region of sensation, spiritual, sensual, of profound and ridiculous physical passions, and tears as terrible and moving as any looked at from the outside that have, oh, once upon a time, made the world laugh or weep. The phenomena are the same. It is the artist who is different. Concerned less with plot than with beauty, he cannot excuse himself if he lies. An enemy really rather contemptuous of story-tellers and realists, he is con-

cerned with the adventures of the soul of man. Nor will he in his use of words emulate their slovenliness. As his highest aim is beauty, so he finds that at least in his own art it is not to be divorced from words; that in themselves perhaps words are the most beautiful things in the world, to be used carefully and not without a real love.

So in comparing D'Annunzio's work with that of the English writers of to-day, it will be found, doubtless, to be less excited and excitable, but, I think, more enthusiastic.

One speaks so many languages, one goes so swiftly by train or electric tram, one lunches so soon after breakfast, that a real sense of humour—that looking on the world as a spectacle of which nothing is strange to us—is among the rarest of habits or gifts. Nor indeed can one say of D'Annunzio that humour is a habit with him. Is there, I wonder, a smile other than that of contempt in all his work? I doubt it. But there, in the silence and remoteness of '*L'Innocente*' or the more profound '*Trionfo*', and even in '*Il Piacere*' too, we find time to feel the genius of places, the enchantment of quiet cities, the breadth of the country, the vastness of the sea.

In '*Il Piacere*' he is perhaps more under the influence of French work than in any other of his longer books. This history of a lust is in some parts almost as ugly as that title; redeemed indeed by the genius of the author from the more sordid and exciting tale of ordinary French fiction, one has glimpses

almost from the first of a new manner of handling landscape, nature, music, everything indeed that is outside the miserable soul of the hero. One is not at the trouble (it is never very wise) to look at any man's work from the point of view of the morality of the day, or its fitness for the rather bilious mind of the seventeen-year-old girl or the schoolboy. Yet it appears to me that D'Annunzio is often quite needlessly obscene, worrying subjects usually dealt with carefully, as a maniac will twist and turn his fingers, never letting them rest for a moment the whole day long. And so, almost in spite of himself as it were, D'Annunzio often attains to a profound morality; for having described with the weary minuteness of the sensualist some scene or passion, one is filled with disgust, one finds the whole thing detestable, where a man of lesser passions and equal genius would have moved us to desire.

And here, too, as in all his works, one finds the hero Andrea Sperelli, as at other times one finds Giorgio Aurispa or Tullio Hermil or Cantelmo or the extraordinary being of '*Il Fuoco*,' isolated, alone, cut off from the world in which he lives by some impassable barrier of the spirit, so that, as it were, the very atmosphere he breathes would prove too rare for another, who after all, one may believe, is not consumed by the same flame as that which is slowly burning the very life out of these sad and passionate people. And so one may say of D'Annunzio, as has been said of Praxiteles, that in spite of his sensuality,

in spite of his implacable animalism, his aim is ideal. And, curiously enough, it is generally in writing of the sea that one finds that vision, without which one may believe the artist works but in vain. For it is not in the actions of men or women, or in their thoughts about one another, that D'Annunzio is interested, but perhaps a little in their loves and in their hates, and chiefly in their thoughts about themselves. And so when for a moment he forsakes humanity and turns to nature, it is that most human of Nature's elements, the sea, with its absorbing passions and furies, its persistence, its incorrigible ugliness, its majestic beauty, its sadness, its changefulness, and above all, its isolation, that becomes for him almost a god after the Greek fashion, possessing in its heart even the passions of men, but confined by no law, ruled by no relentless morality, persuaded from an expression of its desire by no equal voice.

There are no people in D'Annunzio's novels, just as there are no plots, and scarcely even a story. His men and women, his peasants and young Roman patricians, are only real in so far as they are of little importance, in so far as he has spent but little pains on them. Of his men, Andrea and Giorgio, and Tullio, and Cantelmo—yes, even the hero of '*Il Fuoco*'—are but expressions of the same soul, almost of the same body, expressions, if you will, of the author's self, but also of the whole world, as we know it, of the men of our own day, of men as they must have been

yesterday, as they will be to-morrow; not in their strength, scarcely ever that, but in their weakness, and in their desires, and in their temptations, to which it is necessary that they should succumb, so that one finds in them no heroes at all, scarcely even reasonable people, but certain aspects of very life, where people do not usually rise above the implacable circumstances of their lives, and are not too much in love with chastity or asceticism of any sort, and do not concern themselves very often with the necessity of resistance to evil, or desire, which come to them almost always as friends with promises. And as all these things come to man not outwardly at all, there is but little action in this book, and one feels something at the least of that isolation which is to become more pronounced in the ‘Innocente,’ and complete and never to be broken at all in the ‘Trionfo.’ And it is in a moment of profound emotion, of disgust almost, at the ridiculous figure cut by the pilgrims at the shrine of the Madonna, a scene which perhaps to one less scornful of humanity, less cruel, would not have appeared as ridiculous at all, that D’Annunzio speaks to us really honestly from behind the mask of Giorgio Aurispa in ‘The Triumph of Death.’

It cannot be [he says] that his being had its roots in that soil ; he could have nothing in common with this multitude, which, like the majority of animal species, had already attained to its definite and fixed type. . . . He was as much a stranger to these people as though they were a tribe of South Sea Islanders, as much an alien to his country and his native soil as he was to his family and his childhood’s

home. . . . That dream of asceticism which he had constructed with so much splendour and adorned with so much elegance, what was it but another expedient for warding off death? You must train your mind to avoid Truth and certitude if you would live. Renounce all keen experience, rend no veils, believe all you see, accept all you hear. Look not beyond the world of appearances created by your own vivid imagination. Adore the illusion.

It is thus in reality he would counsel us; so that one comes to see that it is not Truth for which we seek but Beauty, and not Beauty perhaps entirely, but creative power. So in another place he can say:—

“You think too much,” she cried; “you pick your thoughts to pieces. I daresay you find them more attractive than me, because your thoughts are always new, always changing, whereas I have lost all novelty for you. In the first days of our love you were less introspective, more spontaneous. You had not acquired a taste for bitter things then, because you were more lavish with your kisses than your words. If, as you say, words are such an inadequate form of expression, why make so much use of them—you often use them cruelly.”

And, indeed, D'Annunzio, like Giorgio Aurispa, is intensely cruel and without pity, utterly scornful, never appeased, keeping his anger for ever against a humanity that has displeased and disgusted him.

He describes the plucking of a living dove with an exactness that is wonderful and needless. His description of the pilgrimage in the ‘Trionfo’ is one

of the most terrible things he has written, yet it is horrible too, for he makes no sign of pity, he sees with the eyes not of a man but of a god or a devil, and is eternally scornful of poor people who were worthy of tears, who must have called forth the tears of a greater man. So he became brutal, and sees a suffering human being only as an object for ridicule, for scorn ; sees the cripple as a barbarian boy might see him, and the unsound of mind as an example of Nature's humour. His manner of describing the aunt of Giorgio in the 'Trionfo' is an example of what I mean, and not an extreme instance by any means. So one sees the pose of the cynic, perhaps his most natural attitude, becoming the most frequent of all his poses, utterly destroying his insight and his creative power, till, as in the 'Fuoco,' he flies over the sky himself, an object for men and angels, having exposed not his own soul alone to the gaze of a world he has hated. So I find him guilty of a deep and ingrained cruelty, that, as I think, he will never quite be able to forget, to unlearn ; for is not cruelty the real malady at the heart of the sensualist, and has D'Annunzio not told us, almost with a great boast, that sensuality has claimed him and held him for its own ?

It was his aunt Gioconda. . . . She was his father's eldest sister, and about sixty years of age. She was lame from the effects of a fall and somewhat stout, but with an unwholesome stoutness—pale and flaccid. Wholly absorbed in religious exercises, she lived her own life shut away from

the rest of the family on the upper floor of the house, neglected, unloved, regarded as semi-imbecile. Her world was made up of sacred pictures, relics, emblems, symbols ; her sole occupation religious practices, sighing out her life in the monotony of prayer and enduring the cruel tortures imposed on her by her greediness—for she adored sweet things, turning in disgust from any other kind of food, and very often she had to go without. Giorgio therefore was high in favour with her because, whenever he came home he never failed to bring her large quantities of sweetmeats.

“Well,” she said, “mumbling through her poor old toothless jaws—“Well, so you have come back ! Eh ! come back ?”

She looked at him half timidly, not knowing what else to say, but there was a gleam of evident expectation in her eyes. Giorgio felt his heart contract with a pang of pity. This poor creature, he thought, who has sunk to the last depths of human degradation—this miserable bigoted old sweet-tooth is connected with me by the insuperable tie of blood. She and I belong to the same race.

“Well,” she repeated, seized with obvious anxiety, and her expression grew almost impudent.

“Oh, Aunt Gioconda, I am so sorry,” he answered at last with painful effort, “I quite forgot to get your sweets this time.”

The old lady’s face suddenly changed as if she were going to be ill, the light died out of her eyes. “Never—mind,” she said brokenly.

“But I will get you some to-morrow,” Giorgio hastened to console her ; “I can get some easily—I will write——”

Aunt Gioconda rallied. “You can get them at the Ursuline convent, you know,” she said hurriedly.

A pause ensued during which she no doubt enjoyed a foretaste of the delight of the morrow ; for judging by the

little gurgling noises in her throat, her toothless mouth was apparently watering at the prospect.

Is that true? If so, it ought never to have been written, at least by a man or woman. In Hell's library, no doubt, such cruel scorn of foolish or bestial men and women is welcomed; on our earth are we not all too nearly approaching the grave—in which be sure, could we but see ourselves, we should appear ridiculous enough, and desire for our poor bones a little pity from the living—for such betrayal as that, for such scorn as that?

And it is not only in such passages that D'Annunzio accuses himself of cruelty; for 'Il Fuoco,' his last book, is, it appears to me, scarcely anything more than a long torture from beginning to end of a woman whom one is continually on the point of recognising by a man one is never in doubt of for a moment. In this book the Egoist has for once obtained entire command, so that art and workmanship, passion, laughter, tears, are forgotten, are never really thought of at all, so absorbed is the author in expressing himself; in which object, I think, he scarcely succeeds at all, showing us, indeed, instead of a man a human monster, very often ridiculous, whose mad or silly passions or freaks of mind he does not scruple to label genius to an astonished world.

Still it is not in such vagaries of a great mind that we must look for the expression of the real

D'Annunzio, but, I think, in the marvellous and quiet pages of the 'Innocente' and in the 'Trionfo' itself. Of all his women, and they are all adorable, I love best her he has named "Turris Eburnea," the divine Giuliana. But in truth she is no tower of ivory, save in that her body is very white and sweet, for she is full of the sensuous, and almost dreamy desire of life, loving and desirable and tender and in despair and almost reconciled with death. But indeed, like his men, his women are almost always the same woman, with or without that profounder sensuality which crowns Ippolyta above Elena Muti as queen of harlots.

And this woman, sweeter than the shoulders of the mountains, desirable and desirous, trips through all his books to the mournful music of the castanets or the melodies of spring or autumn, or the thrumming of the blood in the ears, when she has succeeded in driving us mad for love. She comes to us first as the Duchess Elena, and having given us what we desired, leaves us still unsatisfied as the pale and dear woman of Siena, Donna Maria. And she appears to us again, more desirable than ever, as Giuliana Hermil, Tullio's wife, of the white and flower-like body, whose secrets we learn always with surprise, whose misfortunes only make her dearer to us than before. And last of all, stripped naked, her body marked with the bruises of love, in full womanhood, with red and clinging mouth and feet of clay, we see her crashing down to death locked in her lover's arms, keeping

always life in her remembrance, whilst he has forgotten it. There are no women out of Shakespeare so profoundly feminine. George Meredith's girls are girls, and sometimes borrow more than a little from his delightful boys. But place them for a moment beside D'Annunzio's women and they would show their uncouthness, their shyness, their masculine powers of speech or strength or abruptness of manner too well to be untroubled by the beauty of these we have learned to know as a lover knows his mistress.

And last of all, in these beautiful and mysterious pages of '*Le Vergini delle Rocce*,' we meet those three Princesses, Massimilla, Anatolia, and Violante. Massimilla, who knows that "the shape of her lips forms the living and visible image of the word Amen." Anatolia, who possesses "the two supreme gifts that enrich life and prolong it beyond the mission of death." Violante, whose hair weighs heavier on her brow than a hundred crowns, who has dazed herself with perfumes. In this book of exquisite prose one finds the achievement of the highest poetry. Scarcely to be read without emotion or hurriedly at all, it appeals to us as some majestic and imperial dream. Yet there is nothing but truth in the book, a truth far more profound and necessary than any of the little obvious obscenities or indecencies that have in fiction at any rate almost usurped the very name of Truth herself. These three solitary princesses are no fable, but real beings, born in an old land, in a time that

is in love with change, that is scornful of old things and its own past, and, like the youngest, looks for glory to the future.

After all, we live in a world that shrinks all day long, and maybe in the night too, from death. Let us hug to us, then, Art at least together with the brief charm of the world and the passing glory of the Hills. Content only with perfection; the proper state of mind after creation being, as one likes to remember, that it was very good.

D'Annunzio has written six plays of varying beauty, interest, and power. Two only of these are at all known in England—viz., “The Dead City” and “Gioconda”; of the “Dream of a Morning of Spring” and the “Dream of an Autumn Sunset” we know nothing, as they have not yet been translated into either French or English. Of his last splendid tragedy, in verse, “Francesca da Rimini,” it is almost impossible to speak save in terms of deep admiration. But on a night I shall not forget in the glorious and splendid theatre on the Viminal Hill in Rome, I heard Duse speak the magnificent and sad lines that D'Annunzio has written for her who has made Hell as dear as Heaven. It was not a friendly house. The Roman people, never in history remarkable for perfect taste, satisfied its contempt for the work of a man recognised all over Europe as one of the greatest men of letters of our day,

by stamping and shouting continually whenever their slow and vandal minds were puzzled or disgusted by the beauty of the verse. It was scarcely a pleasant impression one had of Beauty in the hands of the crowd. Yet as the first act proceeded, almost in spite of itself the crowd was compelled to be silent, and the glorious verse passed over it and vanquished it and swept it away, till at the close of a long and perfect page shouts of "Bello!" "Bello!" rang through the theatre, and the beast with innumerable heads was cowed—nay, even loving for the moment to him who had conquered it with beauty. It is impossible for me to speak of "Francesca da Rimini" as a critic. The night I saw it and heard for the first time D'Annunzio's verse spoken by an artist was one of intense excitement. It was the first representation of the play, which had twice been postponed. All Rome was at the Costanzi to see D'Annunzio's triumph or failure. There were, it was very evident, two parties in the house: those who wished his success and those who above all things desired his failure. These two factions were continually at each others' throats. Even the critics—and they came from Russia and from France, from all Italy, and from Germany and England—were hostile or friendly, it was impossible to be otherwise than excited. Magnificently staged, it was, I think, really owing to the acting that it was not a greater success than it proved to be. La Duse is not what she was even five years ago, and her

methods are and always were naturalistic, yet in this play she was more stagey than I have ever seen her before. Salvini, who played Paolo, on the other hand was classical in his method, so that really it seemed to me that it was Francesca rather than Paolo who was as it were the guilty one; that indeed Paolo had very little to do with the matter, he was so little moved, so unconcerned, even when caught in the very arms of Francesca by his brother Malatesta lo Sciancato, Francesca's husband.

And D'Annunzio too, in writing this play, has not treated it romantically as one would have expected, but psychologically, so that we find, or seem to find, that he has analysed and laid bare the very soul and inner motives of the characters, and, as indeed in all his plays, one seems rather to be reading a novel than to be watching the action of a play. There seemed to me, too, to be more than a suggestion of "*Tristan*"—yes, Wagner's "*Tristan*"—in a play that was fulfilled always with desire and the inevitable mastery of passion. But I will say no more. "*Francesca da Rimini*" seemed to me to be almost as beautiful as anything he has written. To be, also, something new in his work, written as it is in a classical language, in verse that he has desired "shall not be too unworthy of Dante."

"*Sogno d'un Mattino di Primavera*"—a "Dream of a Morning in Spring"—is a play written probably after a study of Maurice Maeterlinck, and it is to

be noticed, not in his plays alone, that D'Annunzio is always strongly influenced by the most unlikely people. Nietsche has influenced him strongly, and the Russians, and even Wagner and Maeterlinck. It is a curious story, as lovely as horrible, that might perhaps have been omitted by Boccaccio from the 'Decameron' owing to its morbidness, or its horror, told as those stories were, we may remember, not far from the dying and the terror of great misfortune.

Isabella, the beautiful wife of the Duca of Poggio-Gherardi, is mad. For her lover, a young lord, was killed as he lay in her arms, on her breast, by the duke her husband, and she, drenched in his blood, still held him close, and at sunrise they found her mad. That is the simple and morbid story of a play that is certainly not the least beautiful of all D'Annunzio's work. And one gathers as the play proceeds that Isabella has been sent, together with her sister Beatrice, away into the forest to a villa, there to remain under the care of the doctor, that he may if it be possible cure her. So he banishes from her sight everything that is sad, and the poppies are no longer suffered to grow in the corn-fields, nor are there any red roses to be seen in a world that for Isabella must for the future be green only, with the leaves of the trees and the grass and the whole forest life. And it is really in her becoming one with this green life that the solution of the play seems to lie. And there is in this play, as in "Gioconda," a curious half-

Shakespearean creature, wholly delightful—Virginio—who, like La Sirinetta in the “*Gioconda*,” stands really outside the action of the play, hears and sees all that is passing so inevitably, but is, as it were, untouched by it, a little lower, a little higher—who knows?—than the human race—than the characters of the play, chiefly concerned with listening to the tragedy of a world by which he is moved so little. Ah, it is impossible within the limits of a single chapter on the works of D'Annunzio generally to do justice to the fantastic beauty of what, after all, is almost as nothing beside the “*Trionfo*,” “*La Gloria*,” or “*La Città Morta*.”

The “*Dream of an Autumn Sunset*” is really not a play at all but a vision. The terrible and impossible scenes of lust, and blood, and glory, which can scarcely be realised in the mind, would be ridiculous on the stage, before a public that shrinks from blood as from the very secret of Death. The immense conflagration with which this play closes is certainly a piece of glorious imagination, but the play as a whole is excessive in its very intention, and can scarcely have been written in the saner moments of an author who, after all, is living in a reasonable world.

It remains, then, to discuss “*La Gloria*,” and I will say at once that in many respects, and especially because of its magnificent symbolism, this play seems to me the most remarkable that D'Annunzio has yet written. It is really a picture of Rome—yes, Rome

to-day. For, as I read "La Gloria," Cesare Bronte, who is dying and passing, courageous to the last, impervious to new ideals, fighting to the end those ideas that are destroying him, Cesare Bronte is the Pope—the Papacy; while Ruggero Flamma—the elect one, he who has been chosen by the people and has allied himself with La Gloria, whom in the end La Gloria kills—is the New Rome, the Third Rome, the kingdom that the people chose with so much enthusiasm. I do not think it is possible to give a clear account of this extraordinary play without reproducing it almost word for word. One finds in it a new character—a character entirely new in drama or indeed in Art—"La Folla," the crowd, the multitude. The play opens as it closes, with this tremendous character governing the issues of the play and of life, till it brings about its own destruction, shouting for the head of Ruggero Flamma, the elect one, its chosen leader, whom La Gloria slays after kissing him upon the forehead and the lips. And can any one who has read this play ever really forget that terrible monster and its awful cry, "La sua testa, la sua testa, gettaci la sua testa"?

La Comnèna, or La Gloria, it is the same, is talking with Ruggero Flamma.

"You have longed for me, it was for me you waited," she says.

"I looked for Fame," he answers.

"La Gloria mi somiglia," she says.

The Crowd. Death to Flamma! death to Flamma!

Flamma (*to La Comnèna*). Who are you? who are you?

La Comnèna. Listen! [She goes to the window.

The Crowd. The Empress! the Empress! Death to Flamma! death to Flamma!

[She goes to Flamma and kisses him on the eyelids and on the mouth, and then drives her dagger through his heart.

La Comnèna. Listen! listen!

The Crowd. The Empress! the Empress! Kill her! kill her!

La Comnèna. Listen! Ruggero Flamma is dead.

[There is a moment of silence, and then a long indistinct roar from the multitude.

La Comnèna. Ruggero Flamma is dead. I have killed him, I, even I myself, have killed him.

The Crowd. His head! his head! throw us his head!

[The sacred city is in a great shadow, and to her, as she turns insolently to withdraw the stiletto, there comes a moaning that becomes one vast and terrible cry.

His head! his head! throw us his head!

So ends a play that is, I say it advisedly, without parallel in our time for significance and terror. For here for the first time an artist has attempted that study not only of his own time but of DEMOS, that ugly and merciless being which is in our own day really master of the situation, who, even as the other, hails La Gloria as the Empress.

In the "Gioconda" and the "Città Morta" we have two plays that probably contain the finest dramatic work of D'Annunzio. But he who runs may read, for Mr Arthur Symons' translations are so excellent that they leave nothing to be desired.

The English translations of D'Annunzio's work are, as a rule, very bad; but the two plays, "The Dead City" and "Gioconda," are almost perfect examples of the art of translation, and this is easily tested by the ordinary reader, for in "The Dead City" Mr Symons has translated some passages of Sophocles as they have never before been Englished: I wish he would give us the whole of the 'Antigone,' for we have not even a readable translation of that masterpiece, in English.

Of the novels, that translated the best is the 'Virgins of the Rocks.' The 'Trionfo' probably could never have been properly translated owing to the seventeen-year-old English miss and the sixty-year-old Mrs and Mr; and the same unfortunate habit of blushing on the part of the young and old alike of our race would prevent 'Il Piacere' also from being translated fully and honestly. However, all these can be read, not in the entirety, but perhaps as much so as is desirable, in the French.

What D'Annunzio's future may be I cannot say. That he will accomplish something, and not a little thing, I believe; but since he is now thirty-eight years old, it is time that he came down from the clouds and forgot such visions as the "Dream of an Autumn Sunset" or the "Episcopo & Co.," and turned towards a living world, not less wonderful, in which, as he has already shown us, his true inspiration lies.

The Cities of Italy



I.

AT GENOA.

TO look on Genoa from afar is to see one of the fairest sights of the world. And come to her how you may—by the coast road through Mentone and Ventimiglia, San Remo and Savona, or by sea from Marseilles, or from Turin and Milan over the mountains, down through the olive-gardens by the byways—even from a long way off she appears as the very perfect celestial city. Enthroned in a theatre of mountains with the Mediterranean at her feet, she is like a proud princess, her white brow crowned with the immaculate blue of her sky and the gold that has stained her air and made it precious.

“*Protinus aërii mellis cœlestia dona
Exequar,*”

as Virgil says; and indeed he is not the only one who has noticed this fragrant and precious quality in the air, so that the meanest material, as stucco or whitewash, or the rose colour of the houses, or the ragged garments of the people, seem to be all

of some precious material—the churches and the Pharos of alabaster perhaps, and the poor cotton of a woman's dress of silk or Venice velvet. Mr Evelyn, in his dedication of the 'Fumifigium' to King Charles II., notices the peculiar joys of Italy in the perfumes of orange, citron, and jasmine flowers, which may perfectly be smelt for divers leagues seaward.

And she is of the true South: the bells of the mules carrying firewood and fuel wake one early on one's first morning; and ever afterwards one cannot think of her save as a city of the East, with something Biblical about her, something that we have all longed for from our tiniest childhood,—a blaze of white light full of dust, a pleasant wearying heat, a sound of everlasting summer. Ah, over our fields at Easter, in early spring, have there not always come to us, perhaps, in the vulgar noise amid which Christ dies every year in England while the people make holiday, or in the relief and joy of Easter Day, some tameless desire, some unappeasable longing for the light and dust and heat and atmosphere of Palestine or the South, some covetousness just for once of a weariness of the sun?

Well, it was Holy Week when first I came to Genoa. The air was heavy with the scent of orange-blossom, the smell of ships came up from the sea, the oranges among the blossom on the trees against the dark green foliage were like burning lamps in broad sunlight; in the deep shadow of

the doorways women sat surrounded by innumerable flowers, white and gold and red. Amid all the clangour and noise there was a hush and expectancy. Quite by chance I passed out of the heat and noise of the crowd in the so narrow streets into a church. It was almost dark, but there were many candles burning. The murmur of the city came in through the heavy curtain, and far off I heard the Latin of prayers. Suddenly a voice louder than the rest chanted the Antiphon—

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus.

Ah! I knew then that I had found it—the land of heart's desire, the place I had longed for all the days of my life; and it seemed to me that the very Church herself, distracted and alone on Calvary or by the Tomb in the garden of Joseph, had asked that question, “O all ye who pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow?” and for the first time I realised how far I was from England, in how different a land, though doubtless I might have heard the words often enough in London, where they would have meant almost nothing at all. And so I too heard the young boy priest pass, singing clear—

“Jesus, the son of Mary, has been slain;
O come and fill his sepulchre with flowers.”

Outside was the world at its fairest: the splendour

of that antique sea, the spirituality of the everlasting mountains, the calmness, the ineffable comfort of the soft sky. There was a kind of bloom on the city of palaces; and over towards the lighthouse a great ship put out to sea, perhaps with eyes bent forwards, unconscious of the beautiful city, and I, a sentimental traveller, at least a century behind my time, was captured by the moment, and would have given all the world had it been mine to prolong that short hour so that I might understand all this fading glory of the world.

It is perhaps in some such mood as this that the fortunate traveller may find Genoa the Proud, lying on the bosom of the mountains, whiter than the foam of her waves, a true daughter of the South. To come to her in youth, in the spring, for the first time is, I think, one of the great experiences of life, not to be surpassed by any later passion in Rome or Naples or Florence, that ever after seem but as sisters of the Fairest. Yet I think Genoa gives of her best, at first and from afar. In her narrow and seldom splendid streets one loses the vision, and has to be content with a very inferior picturesque. She was fair, and has had many lovers; from afar she is still desirable.

Yet one remembers sometimes, as one saunters on the ramparts, the story of those vast multitudes that came from all Europe to embark at Genoa for Palestine, to rescue the Holy City from the Turk. What vision that they ever after saw, what mirage in the desert, what dream of the armies of the Prince of Life,

can have compared with their sight of Genoa from the sea, when it was too late to return? And, indeed, in all history one can find no more pathetic tale than that of those 7000 children who came, under the command of a boy of thirteen years, "clamouring for transports" to take them also to the fight for the sepulchre of Jesus, the son of Mary. What became of them? In what old age did they forget the vision when they first came in sight of Genoa, still a long way off? Were there not some among that army of babies who believed that indeed it was to Jerusalem they had come? Were not these marble houses indeed the very palaces of Herod and the High Priest? Was not the first shining church the very Temple where Christ was found by Madonna sorrowing? What became of them all? I have never been able to discover. Yet in that age of iron and of gold, when kings came and sailed away to the sunrise, and countless soldiers, princes, light women, monks and nuns, priests and merchants, loafers and dreamers followed after to die in the desert, there is nothing so magnificent as that boy of thirteen and his army of babies, who, remembering something done for love of them long ago, had come over the mountains only to find the impassable sea.

Life unencumbered by rule thrusts itself on one's notice. A street of palaces ends in a brilliant slum, a vista of bedizened squalor leads one's gaze at last to the splendour of the sea. Yet though one could imagine no angel daring to pass through any London

street, here even in the narrowest places one would see him without surprise, so near to life has one come in a city with a blue sky.

And in Genoa, wherever one may go, it is the sweetness and nobility of nature rather than of art that haunt one's footsteps, the sky that is as lovely as the stars, the mountains that enfold the beautiful city, the sea that, before all seas, before all other things, is the most precious thing in the world.

So often is the traveller, in these days when sunset follows so fast on sunrise, at his work of sight-seeing very early in the morning, as Mr Ruskin among others has directed, that it would appear to be superfluous to say more of the aspect of a place that for me at least is a kind of vision. Yet when one remembers that the sight-seer's day is not as the day of other mortals, that it passes with a tragic swiftness and brings an intolerable weariness, that it is passed for the most part in churches where he never prays or is even quiet for a little, so that his angel may tell him something perhaps of this very place; or it is passed in galleries where the innumerable Madonnas, Aphrodites, and long-faced saints irritate him who is too busy listening to the guide or studying his book, to understand or care for their tears or gestures or side-long looks,—one is tempted for a moment to suggest that a day or two spent in lounging on the ramparts or upon the mountains, or even a few hours stolen from the sunlight and spent in a meditation in some church, would give the traveller more of the live Genoa, more of the true

mood of Italy, than any number of days or weeks given up to rushing from one palace to another, from one church to another, or from the arcades—where one is entranced by the sedate and almost sombre appearance of the living—to the Campo Santo, where one is disgusted, almost for the first time, by the vulgarity and vanity of the dead. I think, indeed, that the sailors with their bearded lips and the strange life of the port are more valuable to us than even Leonardo's John the Baptist in the Palazzo Rosso. He holds no cross as his prototype does in the Louvre, but is like the Bacchus by the same artist that brought to Gautier's mind Heine's notion of the gods in exile “who to maintain themselves after the fall of paganism took employment in the new religion.” “All this joy and gay laughter,” says Heine, “have long been silent; now in the ruins of the ancient temples the old Greek deities still dwell, but they have lost their majesty by the victory of Christ, and now they are sheer devils who hide by day in gloomy wreck and rubbish, but by night rise in charming loveliness to bewilder and allure some heedless wanderer or daring youth.” Was it for this the Baptist preferred the desert to a king's house? Unfortunate gods! Is it not very possible that Dionysus should have enjoyed one more transformation? That Christianity, after all, is but an expression of the same worship in a different way, the same gods seen from a different point of view? Well, it is with some such thought, some such suggestion as this, that one looks on the

beautiful figure in the Palazzo Rosso that Leonardo seems to have hesitated to name either St John Baptist or Dionysus the Dreamer, the Deliverer.

And after one has heard the story of Andrea Doria, and (if one is American) admired the statue of Columbus, and (if one is English) learned how Richard Cœur de Lion on his way to the wars, finding that Genoa had given the “eighty galleys” in which he and the King of Spain with their armies set out for the Holy Land, adopted the battle-cry of the Genoese, “For St George,” which we are wont to consider our own special invocation,—after one has wondered at these things, it is, I think, ever as the city of the South, the gate of Italy, that one thinks of Genoa rather than as the supposed birthplace of Columbus, or the home of Admiral Doria, or the port for Palestine. Nowhere in Italy is anticipation doomed to be so entirely unfulfilled. Seen from afar as the city of dreams, she proves on closer acquaintance a kind of splendid but unbearable nightmare, more noisy than Rome, as filthy as Naples, less homely than Florence. Yet through life she appears to me, through the mist of morning, whiter than snow, or stained by the sunset and violet crowned, the Proud Princess of the South, the warden of innumerable dreams.

II.

AT PISA.

ONE is often tempted at Pisa to think that Italy is as she was long ago, a land of long unhurried days, fulfilled even in their more brilliant moments with a kind of leisure. For the traveller is convinced, after he has seen the little group of buildings on the edge of the city to the north, that Pisa is done with, that she holds nothing else that is precious or worth his time, which, after all, has been snatched so uneasily from business, and in which he is to see not one city or two, but all Italy. But I think, indeed, that to see Pisa truly, is to attain to a kind of culture quite other than is necessary to appreciate Florence or Venice or Rome, or even the works of art that they contain. For there is a silence, and an old world quiet and repose about the place that is only to be found in the smaller cities that the traveller usually passes by without so much as a thought of that old world in which, be sure, they cut a not ignoble figure. Pisa holds only such things as have lasted for a

long time—as quiet, sleep, an antique order, a few churches, a few men, a few women, a few girls and boys, some old priests, and death. Somehow, in spite of the railway, she has been left stranded in her immense plain, within sight of the marble mountains whose daughter she is. And, after all, it is only new and unessential things she lacks; she has the everlasting necessities of the soul of man, among which her miracle picture is not the least. Walter Pater's picture of her as she was in the days of Marcus Aurelius describes her very beautifully as she is to-day.

The partly decayed, pensive town [he writes], which still had its commerce by sea and its fashion at the bathing season, had lent, at one time the vivid memory of its fair streets of marble, at another the solemn outline of the dark hills of Luna on its background, at another the living glances of its men and women, to the thickly gathering crowd of impressions out of which his notion of the world was forming. . . . The great temple of the place, as he could remember it, on turning back once for a last look from an angle of his homeward road, . . . the harbour and its lights, . . . the sailors' chapel of Venus, and the gilded image hung with votive gifts, the seamen themselves, their women and children, who had a whole peculiar colour world of their own; the boys' superficial delight in the broad light and shadow of all that, was mingled with the sense of power, of unknown distance, of the danger of storm and possible death.

Well, one still sees the great temple of the place, and the river and its lights, and the little chapel

of the sailors, once dedicated to Venus now to Madonna; one still finds a great delight in the women and children, and the broad light and shadow of unknown distance, and the danger of storm and possible death. And, coming from the noise of Genoa, above all one finds peace.

Some barrier, miraculous, invisible, guards Pisa from the world, so that one wanders up and down her streets in a kind of ecstatic happiness, with a kind of liberty, since there is no necessity to guard the soul from any roughness or vulgarity, where all is so calm, so beautiful. Yet even in this, perhaps the last of the invincible cities, one finds traces of the handiwork of the enemy; so that even, as in some aspects Pisa lures one into security within her old walls, or her Cathedral, or her magnificent Campo Santo, so in other moods one sees in her a horrible modernity that despises the old things and is swiftly driving them away. As one looks from the windows of the Hotel Victoria along the Lung' Arno, on the wrinkled image of the city in the yellow waters of the river, one sees in that reflection, between the line of houses, a strip of the blue sky full of light, that is still the most beautiful thing to be seen in Pisa, and that has remained unchanged for more than a thousand years. So our good God has placed thus much of immortal beauty beyond the reach of the vandals.

It is of course to the wonderful group of buildings to the northward of the city, just within the walls,

that the curious traveller will first turn his steps. Standing there as though left stranded upon some shore that life has long deserted, they are symbols of all that has had to be given up in order that we may follow her in her modern whims. Coming as one does out from the narrow cloistered streets into the space and breadth of the Piazza del Duomo, one is almost blinded by the sudden light and glory and whiteness of the sunlight on these buildings that seem to be made of moonstone or ivory intricately carved and infinitely noble. And as one stands there, with the tide of life running away from them, though so slowly, through the streets of Pisa and out over the bridges where the trains are marked Milano, Firenze, Roma, Torino, it almost seems as though this Church and Baptistry, the Campo Santo where the cypresses are dying in the earth of Calvary, and the Bell Tower that alone has leaned towards life to follow her, have been really deserted and forgotten by a world that has taken other gods to its heart.

On entering the Campo Santo one is surprised, I think, that it should prove to be so beautiful. Out of the dust and heat of the Piazza one comes into a cool cloister that surrounds a quadrangle open to the sky in which a cypress or two still lives. But it is before the fresco of the Triumph of Death that one stays longest, trying to understand the dainty treatment of so horrible a subject. Those fair ladies riding on horseback with so brave a show of cavaliers,

even they too must come at last to be just dust, is it? or like that swelled body that seems to taint even the summer sunshine lying there by the wayside, and come upon so unexpectedly? What love-song was that troubadour, fluttering with ribbons, singing to that little company under the orange-trees, cavaliers and ladies returned from the chase or whiling away a summer afternoon playing with their falcons and their dogs? The servants have spread rich carpets for their feet, and into the picture trips a singing-girl, who has surely called the very loves from Paradise or from the apple-trees covered with blossom where they make temporary abode. What love-song were they singing ere the music was frozen on their lips by a falling leaf or chance flutter of bird life calling them to turn and behold Death is here?

It is in such a city as this that meditation upon death loses both its sentimental and its ascetic aspect and becomes almost wholly æsthetic, so that it can never be before this fresco that such contemplations can become as it were "a lifelong following of one's own funeral." For the gentle melancholy and desire for life that one experiences in quiet places are in reality but a process of recreation, a new accumulation of emotion and enthusiasm, the coming of reinforcements of one's energy. So in this still and lovely place, as one passes the old fading frescoes and the magnificent sarcophagi or urns or statues, sheltered as they would need to be at home from the sea air, one likes to remember that it was a sight

of these ancient and pagan tombs that inspired the great Pisano to produce his most precious works. His son, Giovanni, who built this airy cloister so daintily, found too among the treasures he was enclosing, life to breathe into his own work.

The sentimental traveller, now somewhat out-moved, may desire, indeed I confess I did, to see this place by moonlight, nor will he be disappointed by so strange a transformation. Amidst a silence less profound than in the sunlight, by reason of the sibilant rustling of even the loneliest night, it seems as though all the great or splendid people who are buried here, or who have worked here, have assembled for some great office, as Compline or belated Evensong. The keen sea-air penetrates and sends a chill along the blood. The fantastic shadows of the dying cypresses dance on the walls like a very company of spirits, and Orcagna's great fresco seems more dainty than ever, more ravishing a story of the romance of man. But even the sentimental traveller is not quite dead, and, worse still, not quite silent either. I suppose the books that have been written by the wise on the buildings of the Piazza del Duomo would fill a long shelf in my library, and the books written by the foolish all the sides of my room. One might as well try to describe the face of one's angel as these holy places of Pisa, which are catalogued in every guide-book ever written. So I will withhold my hand from desecrating further that which is still so lovely. Only if you would hear the heavenly

choirs before death has his triumph over you, go by night into the baptistry, having bribed some choir-boy with a paper lira to sing for you, and you shall hear from that marvellous roof a thousand angels singing round the blessed feet of San Raniero. Nor shall you omit to hear the huntsman's Mass, Missa dei Cacciatori, at Santa Maria della Spina on the Lung' Arno, where in mediæval days Mass was said as early as three or four o'clock so that the huntsmen might be off betimes, but armed against all evil chance by Christ himself.

If it is chiefly as the city of the Leaning Tower that Pisa is known to the vulgar, and to the learned as the birthplace of Niccolò and Giovanni Pisano; to the Italian peasant and noble (if such remain) within the commune of Pisa it is as the dwelling-place of *La Madonna sotto gli Organi*, most powerful and celebrated of miracle pictures in Tuscany. There in the Cathedral she dwells, the blessed protectress of Pisa—nay, of all poor banished sons of Eve; nor till lately, for five hundred years, had any one seen her face. It is true that in 1607 a certain Archbishop, more impudent and proud than is usual even with Archbishops, resolved to remove the seven veils that covered the marvellous picture, and indeed nearly succeeded; but as he was about to remove the seventh veil (so irreverent and proud was he), death swiftly claimed him, and his accomplices—certain prebendaries and workmen—became blind. But at last there came others more im-

pudent and proud than he ; and in that terrible year when, it is said, the saints shook on their thrones for the safety of the very earth, and all devils danced in their own place,—in 1789, in December, on the thirteenth (the one unfortunate day of that blessed month),—Duke Peter Leopold, brother to the Emperor, tore off the seven veils, and for the first time for five hundred years a mortal gazed into the soft eyes of “ Madonna under the Organs.” Good God! what could the wretched man expect ? What power in heaven or earth was there to save him from the awful fate that befel the Archbishop and his “ lousy prebendary ”? Reader, I know not. For what I know,—such is the beneficence of Heaven, and of her our Blessed Advocate, Virgo Clemens, Mater Amabilis, Janua Cœli (ora pro nobis),—Duke Peter Leopold died in his bed and went no lower than Purgatory, where, I think, all inquisitive travellers should pray for him. But that he had the narrowest escape in the world of utter disaster, I, with my hand on my heart, can assert, since on May 29, 1897, I was in the Cathedral of Pisa when they unveiled Santa Maria sotto gli Organi in honour of her Coronation Jubilee. You, too, oh friend Protestant, were honouring in that same year a lesser Queen than *Regina Angelorum*, therefore you should not sneer. It was just after the Charity Bazaar fire in Paris, which happened on the fourth of the same month; doubtless this, as you will see, helped the disaster. There were many thousands

from all Tuscany and the mountains packed in the Cathedral, myself among them, leaning against a pillar near the great bronze west door. Suddenly some one shouted "Fire!" and in a moment that mass of people was struggling madly to get out of the Cathedral. Fortunately (I lay it all at Madonna's feet, I was one of the few who disapproved of this repeated unveiling, though not for orthodox reasons), I reasoned with myself, as : This church is of marble, and therefore a great time must go by before it is consumed ; and, said I, who ever heard of a church being burned down where so miraculous an Image dwells ? (I was wrong in both arguments, but doubtless She sent them ; they served their purpose.) So I stood quite still behind the pillar, embracing it so that I might not be swept away by the crowd. How strong was that pillar of the church, dividing and breaking the crowd like a rock ! Cries and shrieks and agony filled the air, while I said Aves on my fingers against the pillar in fear. Some nine persons were crushed to death and some twenty-one injured. And I think indeed that the little child of two years old that had been knocked out of its mother's arms, whom they found laughing under a bench, and I, were the only persons on that terrible day who were not very much afraid. The child's mother gave its frock, together with a glass case that cost a heap of money, to St Mary under the Organs, for the escape of her little one ; and I—well, my gift I keep to myself. To this

day when I think of Duke Peter Leopold I shiver. Therefore, all ye who pass by, forget not to pray for a moment at the altar of the Madonna of Pisa, seeing she had mercy on a little child and a poor pilgrim in a time of fear and great danger.

Ah, do not be in too great a hurry to leave Pisa for Rome or Florence. They have waited for you now more than a thousand years; let them wait a day or two longer, while you wander through the King's Park towards the sea, and watch the light on the hills, and dream on the top of the famous tower whence you shall see all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. It may well be you will never see that line of hills again; ah, look at them carefully. A little while before to-day the most precious of your dreams was not so lovely as that spur of the Apennines.

“Iam nox inducere terris
Umbras et cœlo diffundere signa parabat.
. . . Mali culices ranæque palustres
Avertunt somnos, absentem ut cantat amicam
Multus prolatus vappa nauta atque viator
Certatim. Tandem fessus dormire viator
Incipit.” . . .

So be it, traveller.

III.

AT SIENA.

BEFORE all others Siena is the typical mediæval city—not without joy. It has been the profound mistake of our democratic age to think in its somewhat sentimental fashion of the Middle Age as a period of almost unbroken gloom. But indeed of all ages of the world I ever read of it seems to me to have been fulfilled with the most splendid enthusiasm, profoundly humorous and merry too, in a way the Reformation and Renaissance and the three million and four differences of the three hundred and fifteen religious sects infesting my dear land have, in England at least, made impossible for us.

But nowadays one does not come to Siena to be amused—at least I suppose not—but to be instructed. And there, I think, indeed, the traveller makes his greatest mistake. Nothing is so amusing as enthusiasm, nor is anything I ever saw so enthusiastic as Italian Gothic.

And Siena, from the splendour of her gates to the intangible sweetness of her Cathedral, is all glorious,

a very king's daughter, a virgin waiting, not in sadness but in ecstasy, for the bridegroom. And her joy has been found in silence, for she has risen up out of the desert, a tower of passionate glory, and her fountains sing her canticle. Fonte Gaia sings of spring, Fonte Branda of the wearying summer, Fonte Nuova of the Resurrection, Fonte Ovile "Gloria in Excelsis." And even as the best and most quiet half of our lives passes away in a dream, "vitam nobiscum dividit somnus," as Seneca says, so it is in such a city as this, fulfilled with a temperate silence, that the most precious hours of an ever anxious life are found at last. For it would be impossible to die without regret while so much beauty lingers in the world, nor, since our angels will at last entice us hence, shall we be surprised at the loveliness of any celestial city. For Siena is the virgin of Italy, Turris Eburnea, and sings Magnificat. All the splendour of Rome is but a bubble while her beautiful white body lies upon the mountains. I am content, having seen her, for ever after to look on nothing but the sky, in the which I may mirror her enfolded in ineffable peace, guarded by innumerable angels invisible, whose swords unscabbarded meet point to point, beneath which dome of flame, in the attitude of prayer, my city stands.

It is to the cathedral that the traveller will first turn his steps, and maybe wisely. For there one sees a new creation of the heart of man, all the mystery and passionate groping after God, all the fierce desire of unspoken prayers that in the North have created

Amiens and Chartres and Beauvais, curbed and fulfilled with a kind of magical grace and sanity, so that one remembers rather how God loved the world than His resolve to consume it in a moment, and destroy, who knows, us too with the wicked.

Begun in the year 1229 or thereabout, the Cathedral of Siena is, I suppose, the most perfect piece of Italian Gothic anywhere to be found. For a time at least the Italians had forgotten their old gods and remembered only Jesus of Nazareth and Madonna Mary. Yet in all that forgetfulness there remains some glimmer, some suggestion, of that older civilisation in a grace and proportion and sanity quite foreign to the Cathedrals of France and Germany and England, where there was neither religion nor civilisation to forget, that lends a new sweetness even to-day to Christianity in Italy. Heaven is not so far off from us in Italy as in England; one does not grope in any mysterious gloom after a terrible God, but in a garden of sweetly-coloured marble and level light one as it were walks at least with saints, and is not afraid or mystified at all, but just happy. In the North we are so serious, so gloomy in our faith: here they have, as it were, humanised Christianity. And in spite of the Northerner's inevitable dislike to any sort of familiarity in dealing with the dead, who in his gloomy and smoky cities he has forgotten are not dead but alive for ever, he cannot but be moved by the evidence all about him of the way in which the Italian disdains to be afraid or to forget them. So, remem-

bering they are indeed alive, he asks their prayers and paints their more noble or wonderful deeds upon the walls of God's house, and, not morbidly or with curiosity, but very lovingly, keeps their dust about him.

And it is with one of these, long dead and now alive in heaven, that in Siena one is almost compelled to live, seeing that it was her home.

Born in Siena in 1347, St Catherine was the daughter of Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa, who had beside twenty-four other children. It was in the Contrada d'Oca, in the valley between the church of San Domenico and the Duomo, that she was born, in a house still standing, over whose door are written the words, "Sponsae Christi Catherinae domus." In 1367 she received the habit of the third order of St Dominic, and from that time earth and this fair city fell away from her, and her little cell became for her heaven and all. It was in silence that she found her great teacher, so that she never at this time spoke to any one save God and her confessor. And that mysticism that afterwards enveloped the souls and bodies of St Teresa and St John of the Cross seems also to have come to her and conquered her. In her contemplation, vile and filthy imaginings, desperate thoughts and despicable passions fought in her soul for mastery, while she, calm and a virgin, told her beads in silence. "At her voice, nay, only looking upon her, hearts were changed," and with a kind of genius men, by the time she was twenty-four, called her

“mother,” and her confessors, meeting her majestical eyes under those straight brows, called themselves her sons, as they were indeed already her disciples. So unlearned that she had never been able to read or write, she is taught by a miracle, and becomes, as all the world is a witness, “a writer of singular beauty, force, and distinction.”

In the short thirty-three years of her life she changed the political aspect of Europe, and her power became greater almost than that of the Papacy itself. For she fulfilled the Dominican ideal of the union of contemplation and labour. In all her century hers is the most splendid figure: Popes and kings shrink into insignificance beside this mystic with a genius for politics, who at any moment of her life, howsoever splendid or successful, would, how gladly, have retired into the silence of a tiny cell. And it was from her unbroken silence in her cell in Siena that she came one day of spring, conquering and to conquer. It was she who was to tame the implacable enemy. The wearying and terrible wars of Guelf and Ghibelline that bolt the Middle Age with the iron of their noise were hushed, and both were united against the Holy See. She, but a girl, a visionary, that in a hundred encounters had possessed herself of the passion of infuriated mobs, the anguish and regret of the dying, the misery of a little world, sick and plague-stricken, saw the banners of the league blazing with the splendid and impossible word, *LIBERTAS*; and it may

well have been in pity for mankind, in sympathy with its disappointments and follies and its natural human hopes, its ridiculous and touching faith in itself, that she, never doubting, intervened and prevented Siena, Arezzo, Lucca, and other cities from joining a cause so sure of failure.

The Pope, Gregory XI., far away in Avignon, a coward and a fool, had at last found a champion before whom the very world was but as a shadow. And at last the Florentines, overcome by her who had so lately left that silence where God dwells, asked her to be their mediator with the Pope. At the gates of Florence she was met by the chief magistrates, who sent her with magnificent honours before them to Avignon.

What panoply of war or crusade, what defiance of authority in the name of liberty, what terror of red death, can match in nobility and splendour that scene so long ago? A girl, scarcely twenty-nine, her white passionate face overruled by silence and contemplation and communion with God, goes forth to compel the Pope to return to Rome, utterly without fear and without doubt.

St Catherine came to Avignon on the 18th June 1376; she was received by the Pope and Cardinals. To her Gregory XI. says, "I put the affair entirely in your hands, only I recommend you the honour of the Church. I desire nothing but peace." Thus at last she persuaded him to return to Rome, and yet he dared not, unless she held his hand; so that

we find that she met him at Genoa in September of that year and led him into Rome. But in truth the Florentines desired not peace but war, and it was only after a most terrible struggle that she brought peace to him in 1378; immediately after she returned to her cell. Yet after all it was not in peace but in grief and tears that she died two years later, the people having chosen another Pope, Urban VI., and knowing this “she would dissolve into floods of tears.” Her body is in Rome in the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, a gloomy place enough, while her head is preserved most magically in her own city, in the Duomo.

Having so briefly and imperfectly sketched her actions, there remain over thirty-three years of life in which she talked with Jesus and received indeed from His very hands, which the nails had pierced, the Blessed Sacrament. It is told of her how that one Nicola Tuldo of Perugia, being condemned to death, and he, still in his youth, utterly refusing even for a moment to contemplate so hard a fortune, cursing God therefor, and refusing all consolation, she “came and spoke with him; whence he received such comfort that he confessed and made her promise by the love of God to stand at the block beside him on the day of execution.” And yet, even after he had looked into those quiet eyes, he feared the great enemy so that he prayed the Saint to stay with him that he might die content. O wonderful! And says she, “his head lay on my breast. Then

I felt a great joy within me, and the odour of his blood rose up, and I said, ‘Comfort thee, my brother, the block shall soon become thy marriage altar, for sure I will stand beside thee.’” And so she laid her white neck on the block and prayed for his soul and for herself. Then came Tuldo walking “like a gentle lamb,” and she preceding him he seemed content, and calling the names of Jesus and of Catherine he died; while she beheld his soul borne by the angels into God’s love. Then she “held his head within her hands, her dress was saturated with his blood, which she could scarcely bear to wash away, so deeply did she triumph in the death of him whom she had saved.” That is but one incident in a life almost beyond modern dreams. “Be thou, be thou, that fragrant flower spreading its fragrance abroad in the sweet presence of God,” she wrote. Well, is it not with some such refreshment one comes even to-day from her chapel in the Duomo? But in reading that story of Tuldo, contained in her letter to Brother Raimondo of Capua, it is not only the ecstasy of love we see but the ecstasy of desire. How different perhaps her life might have been had she been less convinced, less captured, in that silence. One hears in her words the ecstatic madness of the profound voluptuary, the sensualist. “The odour of his blood rose up,” she says, and in her simple and wise way speaks of her sensuality as of a mighty weapon, “arming oneself with one’s sensuality.”

Nor is she afraid, for she says to the Pope, “ Be a brave man, and not a coward ; ” and to the King of France she says, “ I will.”

Ah, all saints beside her are but little children ; was it not she who wrote, seven hundred years ago, “ The intelligence feeds the affections — who knows most loves most, and he who loves most enjoys most.” One follows her as did those crowds ages ago, even to-day, because one must. Ruled by her will and overcome and utterly defeated, we see “ a vast multitude clothed in sackcloth and in purple, in iron and in gold,” every sort of person comes under her influence and is captured and a slave for ever. It is not only Gregory XI. and Queen Joanna of Naples and the King of France that are overcome by her, nor malefactors like Tuldo nor holy men like Stephen, but all sorts and conditions of men and women, nuns and friars, soldiers of fortune, light women, and citizens. And in a vision our Saviour presented her with two crowns, one of gold and the other of thorns, bidding her to choose. Says she, “ I desire, O Lord, to live here always conformed to thy Passion and to find pain and suffering my delight,” and, taking the all-glorious crown of thorns, she pressed it on her brows, loving it better than all else in that she therein wore even what He had worn, for her too among the others.

Reader, before so lovely a saint, so glorious a woman, will you too not rest contented for a day or so ? Ah, but I have not told you a hundredth part of

her history. She is a thousand times more glorious than I have said : read her own words, and you, too, will love her city better than all the more famous places. And it is here in Siena you should think of her, not of our little day. And if your angel should have it in his heart to give you the happiness of remaining in Siena over the sixth day of May, you too, O son or daughter of the North, whence we have frightened all our saints ages ago, may see a tiny remnant of her lovers that still worship at her shrine, friars and nuns, soldiers and light women, and all sorrowful people and oppressed, whose eyes gush out with tears before her who changed the hearts of those who only looked upon her.

IV.

AT ORVIETO.

A CITY of convents and monasteries, exquisite, of the spirit, apart from the world, to be compared only with a vision of the heavenly city; such is the impression the traveller receives on first catching sight of Orvieto from afar. Too few seek her in her silence and her solitude; for the many the more resounding cities suffice. In a noisy night on the railway, distracted by innumerable and abortive dreams, half-asleep, half-awake, in all the agony of dawn in the train, one rushes past a place that has little to offer but peace. And when one desires the greatest of all, and is so near to her, when almost every moment one expects to see the domes and roofs of Rome herself, it is not Orvieto in her simplicity that can turn us from the goal of all our world, even for a moment. Yet somehow more than all the modern magnificence and trumpery splendour of the Eternal City, Orvieto in her antique garments, with her spiritual country face, very like one of Raphael's Madonnas, has for us the gift of Italy.

“Imagine,” says Gabriele D’Annunzio—“Imagine a rock in the midst of a melancholy valley, and on the top of the rock a city, so deathly silent as to give the impression of being uninhabited—every window closed—grass growing in the dusty grey streets—a Capuchin friar crosses the Piazza—a priest descends from a closed carriage in front of a hospital, all in black and with a decrepit old servant to open the door; here a tower against the white, rain-sodden clouds—there a clock slowly striking the hour, and suddenly, at the end of a street, a miracle—the Duomo.”

But it is not to the impatient traveller—he who stays but one night within her walls—that this city set on a hill under the soft sky will reveal her secret; but to him who, having spent sufficient time in the silence of the Cathedral, has cleansed his heart, so that he may understand her story. You might almost say that within her walls is contained the whole Christian mythos, beginning with Genesis and ending with the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin; the centre, the climax, the supreme mystery of the whole being the tremendous secret of the Doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament. And it is not in the Cathedral alone that Orvieto declares to us that Christianity has conquered a reluctant world, for in herself she is a monument of that victory. In the Piazza del Duomo there are four buildings beside the Duomo that are inevitably connected with the Church, and so with Christ. The oldest,

the Palace of the Bishop, stands beyond the Cathedral, and though begun in 977 and enlarged by Adrian IV. in 1151, it is now mainly a building of the sixteenth century. We then turn to the Palace of the Popes—Palazzo Soliano, that with the decay of religion has been turned into a museum—built by Boniface VIII. in the end of the thirteenth century. Beside this palace rises the Hospital, built in the end of the twelfth century, and opposite the cathedral itself we find the Opera del Duomo, built in the fourteenth century, a magnificent piece of work. Thus for Orvieto, at the least half her life was laid up in heaven, where also her treasure was. For it was to a miracle that she owed not only her beauty but her true being, there on her great rock above her melancholy valley, a very miracle herself, famous, and holding gifts. And even as she owed her splendour to the blood of Christ, so she seems to have desired the blood of man, staining her streets with that mystical and shameful river of life in the month of August 1312, and at other times when civil war reigned in the streets and many hundreds of citizens perished. And, whether under the Monaldeschi, or the Popes, or the Neapolitan king, always her streets ran with blood—it is as it were the very symbol of herself.

But after a week, or even a few days, spent within her walls, it is always to the Cathedral that the traveller will return to be satisfied with its beauty and its dreams. Built in order to commemorate one

of the most famous of miracles—that of Bolsena, the story of which Raphael has painted on the walls of the Vatican—the Cathedral is itself perhaps one of the mightiest miracles of the world. And this it may be is scarcely strange, for the miracle the Cathedral commemorates is the divine expression of the truth of the doctrine of transubstantiation—the actual Sacrifice of the Mass. After all, has not this very idea divided Christendom? It is scarcely strange then that it should have created even the Duomo of Orvieto. It happened in this wise among a faithful, simple, and childlike people, who were in love with the story of Christ and His Mother. A certain German priest—ah, Martin Luther, another of your countrymen—had dared to doubt the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Utterly tired and weary of his doubts, disturbed by his uncertainty, he set out for Rome, so that there, in the capital of his religion, he might decide at last or be persuaded. For it began to appear plain to him that if this that he presumed to doubt were indeed untrue other things he had scarcely thought of as yet might be untrue also. It was, therefore, we may well believe, in a certain sadness of heart that he set out for Rome, and, “resting one day on the shores of the beautiful lake of Bolsena,” which is but twelve miles from Orvieto, he, at the request of the villagers, celebrated a Mass for them in the Church of Santa Cristina, which is with us even to this day. And though Santa Cristina is

rejected by all authority, she has her lovers in the sweet Umbrian country who will never forget her, and perhaps for their love she brought these things to pass—being in Heaven at the time. For it happened that as our German doubter (Raphael says he was but a lad) elevated the Host, more than ever troubled in his mind concerning the doctrine that none of those simple folk in the church there thought of doubting for a moment, he saw drops of red blood upon the Corporal, “each stain severally assuming the form of a human head, with features like the ‘Volto Santo,’ or portrait of our Saviour.” O wonderful! What shame in his heart, what anger at his doubts, what love, what certainty, what gladness! Overcome by fear and reverence, he, sinner that he was, dared not consume the Holy Species, but with eagerness and love reserved the Body of our Lord, and travelling in haste to Orvieto, where the Pope then was, he, not without shame, confessed to him not only the miracle that had happened but his doubts also. The Bishop of Orvieto at the command of the Pope hastened to Bolsena, and brought from the altar of Santa Cristina the Sacred Host and the Blessed Corporals. The Pope himself, Urban IV. it was, passed with all the splendid clergy, with joy, with music, in procession to meet him who indeed bore Christ along with him.

Thus was instituted the magnificent festival of Corpus Christi, whose office St Thomas Aquinas, the Angelical Doctor, composed. The Sacred Host

rests to-day in the Capella del Corporale in the Cathedral, surrounded by the magnificent frescoes of Ugolino di Prete d'Ilario, that tell the story to the world.

Thus, in the simple days of old, miracles happened and men believed, and chased the devil down the vistas of his own damnable doubts. To us valiant shopkeepers disputing about the reality of matter it is doubtless nothing but a fairy tale at best; some of us even may be so strict as to call it a lie—yet I can but hope they are few. For we, too, have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us the noble works done in their day and in the old time before them. After all, I would rather be wrong with St Francis than right with Martin Luther.

In order, therefore, to celebrate this miracle, men built the Cathedral of Orvieto—nor is there anything more marvellous extant upon earth. Fra Angelico did not hesitate to spend his genius on her walls. Signorelli, who is so much greater than his fame, in 1499 began to paint the vaulting and the walls. And amid all the magnificence and richness of the work around one, it is again and again to his work that the traveller will return—always with joy.

Born at Cortona in 1440, Vasari declares that in his day his works were more esteemed than those of any other master. It is strange that they should have fallen into such neglect in our own. It is the human form that especially delights him, so that in Uffizi we find a picture called The Virgin holding her

Divine Son in her Lap, in which the shepherds in the background are naked and unashamed, as in an older age. It is, however, in the Cathedral at Orvieto that we find his best work. Says Vasari, "I am not surprised that the works of Luca were always highly extolled by Michaelangelo, or that for his (Michael's) divine work of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel he should have *courteously availed himself to a certain extent* of the inventions of Signorelli, as, for example, in the angels and demons, in the divisions of the heavens, and some other parts, wherein Michaelangelo imitated the mode of treatment adopted by Luca, as may be seen by every one." In looking at his work in the Cathedral, it is perhaps a question whether Michael borrowed to advantage. Nothing more extraordinarily thoughtful and subtle than the Antichrist is to be found in Michael's Last Judgment. So like to Christ as indeed to be always mistaken for him from a distance, Antichrist has all the beauty, all the cynical hatred of mankind, which listens to him in adoration that, after Luca has suggested it to us, we might expect. It is hardly necessary, one might say, for the devil to whisper to him; in his heart all the cruelty and villany of the universe have been sown and come to flower.

Opposite, the fresco of the Resurrection, with its huge naked angels sounding their death-destroying trumpets, decked with a banner of the cross, crushes us beneath its tremendous imaginative power. In

his magnificent mind the Resurrection took form, so that he, as it were, was able to comprehend it and its humanity, and show it to us ere it had been resolved out of the confusion of the trumpets into the order of the syllables of God. Visions as splendid as those of Dante dawn upon him. The Punishment of the Wicked, the Reward of the Blessed, and Paradise. Perhaps Luca Signorelli alone of all great painters, not excepting the author of the Triumph of Death in the Campo Santo at Pisa, has, as it were, comprehended heaven and hell. With his tremendous thoughts as our companions we walk the streets of Orvieto, ever finding it necessary to return again to the Cappella della Madonna di S. Brizio in the Cathedral. And when at last we leave the beautiful city for Rome, or for Florence, or for the country, it is perhaps with a new vision of life that we set out; a little tired of less absolute things, till immersed in the history of the Eternal City, or in the thoughts of the Humanists at Florence, we come to see again that man too is, as it were, God in the making, seeing that he was made in the image of God.



Photo by Ilinari Brothers.

ST. PETER'S, ROME.

V.

ROME.

IT is necessary to remember in writing of Rome as she is to-day that although she has so lately been born again, as it were, yet in reality she is old, the very Mother indeed of all those who come, never altogether as strangers, to her. And so when one sees her modern buildings and streets and statues, whether they are noble, or, as is more often the case, ignoble, it is always with a consciousness that something has been destroyed to make room for these newer things, something that was nearly always very noble and beautiful indeed, and scarcely ever ignoble or ugly at all. And strangely enough one's first impression almost, on coming to so beautiful a city, is one of vandalism ; as though a people hitherto devoted to order and sanity had suddenly gone mad, and had begun to destroy its most priceless possessions, quarrelling in a ridiculous and almost impossible fashion with its own past, the work of its fathers, the dwelling-places of its Gods.

Scarcely anything in modern Italy will so surprise

and disgust the traveller as the preparations that are being made on the Capitoline Hill in Rome for a statue to that harmless and theatrically fierce monarch, Vittorio Emmanuele II., in which not only has some eight millions of lire (£320,000) been already spent, but the Palazzo Torlonia, built in 1650 by Fontana, has been utterly destroyed.

On account of the same ridiculous piece of vanity and conceit on the part of a family who thirty years ago were among the petty monarchs of Europe, the Palazzo Venezia, one of the most glorious palaces in the world, must lose the wing facing the Corso, and the Franciscan monastery of Santa Maria in Aracœli has been pulled down. So Vittorio Emmanuele II. aloft on a ruined monastery will be able to gaze with all the effrontery of the Switzer down the Corso, a street almost as old as history, which his son has had the temerity to rechristen after himself. One scarcely desires to speak in harsher language of those who, having done some good things in their lives, are now no longer able to do harm. Yet this act of hideous vandalism does not by any means stand alone in Rome, much less does it do so in all Italy. In the history of Rome much blame is laid to the account of the Barbarian which is not his due: it has been hitherto generally at the hands of her own sons that she has suffered most. But here for once it is the barbarian and no Italian who has heaped destruction upon destruction, and built too, after his fashion. When those who shall come after, ask perhaps of

our sons, or even of our very selves, the questions, "Who turned our Tiber into a ditch and bridged with hideous iron the river of Horatius and the Cæsars? Where is the golden tower of Nero, and where is the Ghetto of Rome? What have you done with our monasteries and convents, S. Maria in Vallicella, SS. Apostoli, S. Silvestro in Capite, S. Silvestro di Monte Cavallo, S. Maria della Vergine, S. Andrea della Valle, S. Maria Minerva, S. Agostino? Where are the gardens and villas of Negroni, Ludovisi, Corsini? Where are the cypresses of history, and the ruins that cannot have come to us bare and ashamed as these we see?"—When they shall ask these questions, take them in silence along the Corso "Umberto Primo" so far as the Piazza Venezia, and with all the reverence due to the occasion and to so humble, honest, and faithful a king, point to the statue that shall offend the sky and say, "Ask him—he knows."

So it is not without shame for a city once so noble, a race so persistent and glorious, that one comes to Rome to-day. For now beauty is in tears and forgotten, and the intellect of Rome is even as the intellect of America, and possibly of England too, gone in search of money, only not so successfully nor so naturally and honestly. And I, too, who am younger than the third Rome, have yet lived long enough to be sad for a city I had meant to worship, and cannot but love in spite of her gaze that has grown vulgar and craven, and her brows that are

lined with the counting of coins. It was not her habit of old. Have not her eyes blazed with anger and her brows been set to meet the world? But now the crowd has seized upon her, nor has it grown afraid as yet. But I believe, and am sure, that some day in the Forum or upon the Hill of the Cæsars it will suddenly come upon some mighty trove, the very head of Jupiter or the bones of Augustus Cæsar, and then and in a moment the crowd shall be afraid, and through the darkness of the centuries it will see a great light, and from the dust of Rome that hero shall arise for whom she has ever been the insatiable mistress; and he shall set up her altars again, and he shall lift up her head and kiss her on the lips, and Beauty shall no longer be an outcast, and once more she shall awake, still and for ever the one immortal city. This is my faith.

Ah! there are many points difficult to decide in that train of thought that leads each man who has once loved her to create for his own soul the fourth Rome! For the Roman is an old and proud man; in his veins throbs the blood of the world's remotest ancestors. He has suffered much from treason. And having taught us government and given us of his strength, he is to-day more easily bewildered by the malady that has seized on us too. His magnificent families he has buried with tears; he sees the chimneys belch forth foul smoke over Rome and hears the groaning of the living cypresses as they fall beneath the barbarian axe of those we hounded on.

Hucksters and swindlers, gamblers and thieves, dwell in the palaces of his ancestors, and drive on his Hill of Gardens and in the private pleasure-grounds of his greatest nobles. Is this not enough for Latin blood to bear? No, it is not enough; for under the government of the crowd he is distracted between his allegiance to his country and his allegiance to his God. It would take from him not only the beauty of his land, the children of his loins, the bread he has grown, the very light of his sun, but his dream of heaven also, so that at last, having made him worse than a beggar, it must put out his very eyes too, that he may not see his deep and profound sky full of the immemorial stars, nor think of Mary when he sees the crescent moon, nor find the sign of Jesus in the east, nor the power and loving-kindness of his God in the rainbow. So is he most wretched, yet must we believe in him; for he will not always be silent in his misery, nor listen to the insolent and vulgar laughter of those who have beggared him without protest.

So let us think of Rome to-day as on the point of waking, having washed herself in sleep and gathered the beauty of her dreams. And though her streets are not so noble as of old, nor her government so splendid, nor her people so happy nor so beautiful nor so strong, even yet she has many splendours still about her, not religious only but of the world too, in garden and palace, and ruin, in which we may joy, seeing that they are still left us after the deluge of the crowd that has swept away so much. Even to-

day to see the sun set from the Pincio, or at that hour to watch the Trinità de' Monti flame with gold and purple, are two of the most wonderful sights of the world. If St Peter's dome appeals only to those who love that of which it is a sign, the Pantheon embraces all the world. And from the Janiculum saint and sinner, bond and free, alike may look at last, perhaps after years of waiting and desire, upon the eternal hills above Albano, and the mountains of the Sabine that are covered with snow, and may remember that Cæsar and Virgil, Horace and homesick Ovid, saw them too even as we do. Let us think only of old things for a time, since we can almost see the sea that was furrowed by the kingly ships of Carthage and of Tyre. So we shall be comforted even in the modern capital of Italy, because those gods who dwell in the sea and upon the mountains and in the valleys of their earth can never die, neither will they permit their world ever really to forget them.

VI.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN ROME.

CAN a heretic ever be really at home in Rome, ever shake off the oppression almost of feeling everywhere that he is really an outsider? This curious and yet not wonderful mood that the city thrusts upon those who are strangers to her later passions is especially noticeable at Christmastide. One is then sure to meet a great many unmistakable Englishmen, English parsons, English people of all sorts in the Forum or on the Palatine Hill, or shyly gazing at the Colosseum. Of course this may simply be a result of the foresight of Messrs Thomas Cook & Son ; but I am inclined to think it is not wholly due to that, but to a desire on the part of the heretic to escape from the inquisition of the great city during a time of religious emotion, to hold to more friendly things, the spacious days of the Emperors, the earnestness of the Republic, and to forget everything Papal and mediaeval with which England at least has nothing in common at all—of which indeed she hardly understands the language.

Yet in Rome Christmas is not a season of emotion.

There is not nearly so much jovial goodwill towards men as one may see at that season in London. It is very curious to see the Roman nowadays, chiefly indifferent or hostile to the Church as he is, and remember the years that the locust hath eaten; and remembering too the suppression of the convents and monasteries, it is amusing on the Eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception to walk through the city and see the lines of tiny lamps hung out of numberless houses that one would never suspect were monasteries and convents, but for that little expression of emotion. It is curious that one sees nothing of the sort on the vigil of Christmas. It is perhaps certain that Rome finds the Blessed Virgin more sympathetic, more likely to be delighted with lines of dancing fairy lamps, than Il Gesù Cristo.

It was already towards evening, and the sun was sinking somewhere over the Campagna, when I went out into the streets to keep the vigil of Christmas. As I turned out of the Corso into the Via Condotti, the Spanish steps, magnificent and splendid, bathed in the gold and glory of the setting sun, seemed to show to me, by a happy fortune, almost a piece of the very garments of old Rome wrapt in her eternity and the magnificence of her penances. In a mood too difficult to explain, I went under the heavy leathern curtain, held aside for me by a beggar, into a little church, curiously dark for a Roman church and with but few candles on the altar. The Litany of Loretto was being sung to a curious dance tune, to which the

Virgin seemed to trip and bow in acknowledgment of her beautiful names. It was a very poor little church, that had probably never given refuge to the devout rich or the ultramontane stranger. Yet I was very fond of it, for there, albeit very badly sung, one could still sometimes hear the old plain-song, and I who had tramped Rome in search of music and always been given Mozart or Mendelssohn or Gounod, who had spent weary and agonised hours in the Gesù unable to move, with 3000 people pressing upon me and three organs declaiming the Credo, was glad to listen to the old Gregorian tones even though they were murdered by the poor lad who sang them.

As I knelt there watching the beauty of the burning candles, or listening to the incomparable names of the Virgin, it seemed to me that perhaps I was keeping the vigil of Christmas for the first time, and that although I was a heretic I too perhaps might rejoice even with the true shepherds and the wise kings for that Jesus was born into a world that was expecting Him—but without excitement. Near the high altar, but a little to the right, was the *præsepio*, not yet visible, waiting, as it were, for the knock on the door that indeed we were all but expecting too—the grave, even voice of St Joseph; the song of the angels, “Gloria in excelsis Deo”; the swift and eager simplicity of the shepherd-boys; the magnificence of the three kings—the Desire of all Nations. The church was crowded with the

poor and that indescribable class of persons who are neither very poor nor a little rich: they crowded round the confessionals; and many remained a long time praying before a curiously modern picture of the Virgin, in front of which two exquisite tapers were burning, lending the picture a beauty that otherwise it could never have possessed. Nor were we without the gift of tears. For a child of scarcely three years old wept almost incessantly, but softly, oh, softly, to the crooning of the mother, whose other child, a boy of about six, was playing with a dog in a corner. Presently a soldier—a sergeant of infantry, I think—came in with his wife and little boy, who held by a string a little air-ball, the colour of the sky, that presently escaped him and flew up with the incense-smoke to the old, sweet angels on the ceiling. He gazed after it for a long time, and then with that indescribable little curtsey that even the youngest, tiniest child, howsoever ragged, evil, or unclean, will never pass the high altar without dropping, he followed his mother, who had a message for the Virgin, oh, of gladness for her, for her who had known too the joy of a tiny first-born son.

The beautiful names had become more tender, more appealing, more curious, and at last magnificent:—

Regina Angelorum,
Regina Martyrum,
Regina Virginum,
Regina Sanctorum omnium,

Regina sine labe originali concepta,
Regina Sacratissimi Rosarii.

The voices of the impossible ; the harsh, violent voices of the poor and the vicious ; the starved, thin voices of the poor and the persecuted ; the profound, unlovely voices of the poor and the indifferent,—answered to each magnificent and splendid title in the equally marvellous words—

“Ora pro nobis”;

and I kept repeating to myself so that I might not lose touch of reality : “This is Christmas Eve : in the rich and splendid churches of Rome a thousand candles are burning on every altar—even in the churches of the very poor they do what they can ; I can count six—no, eight with the two smaller lights—even here to-night, and I like it better so. This is Christmas Eve : in the rich and splendid shops of London a thousand gas-jets flare—even in the shops of the very poor they do what they can ; how many kerosene-lamps might I count to-night in the Hampstead Road ? This is Christmas Eve ; they too keep the feast. All Europe is bending to-night over the manger to which ‘Jesu parvule’ came from His heaven—but without excitement.”

“In dulci jubilo, now let us sing with mirth and jo !
Our heartis consolation lyes in præsepio,
And shinës as the sun, matris in græmio.
Alpha es et Omega, Alpha es et Omega.
O Jesu parvule, I thirst sore after Thee ;
Comfort my heart and minde, O Puer Optime,

and in our fashion too we sing in Rome as in old days—but without excitement.

When I came out after the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, there was still running in my head that curious half-Eastern tune that is so often played here in Italy during the moment of the profound silence. It is like a rushing of wind, or the far-off sound of drums, or the sound of flutes not so far away. Past the innumerable shrines of the Virgin that thread the labyrinth of the city, marking for ever the indestructible footsteps of the Middle Age, I went to look down on the kingdom the “*Jesu parvule*” had won and to hear the bells of Santa Maria Rotonda cry to Him on His birthday, “*Vicisti Galilæe.*” Ah, how great was that victory! In all the majesty of ruin, still splendid in spite of the wounds of the Christian centuries, the Pantheon alone in all Rome remembered the very song of the angels. From beneath that marvellous dome what gods had heard the multitude of the heavenly host, and looked forward perhaps even to to-day, not altogether in shame or fear, since of all the temples of their world this alone still stands? To-night the rain had wetted the floor beneath that field of stars, and as one gazed upwards to the sky that was the roof, the moon fled backwards as it were with great speed, or soared up swiftly as if to leave this earth for ever, then during interminable moments fell through the void. And over the sad, sweet music of the Church came the sound of the winds of heaven, and the drops of rain that fell from such unimaginable

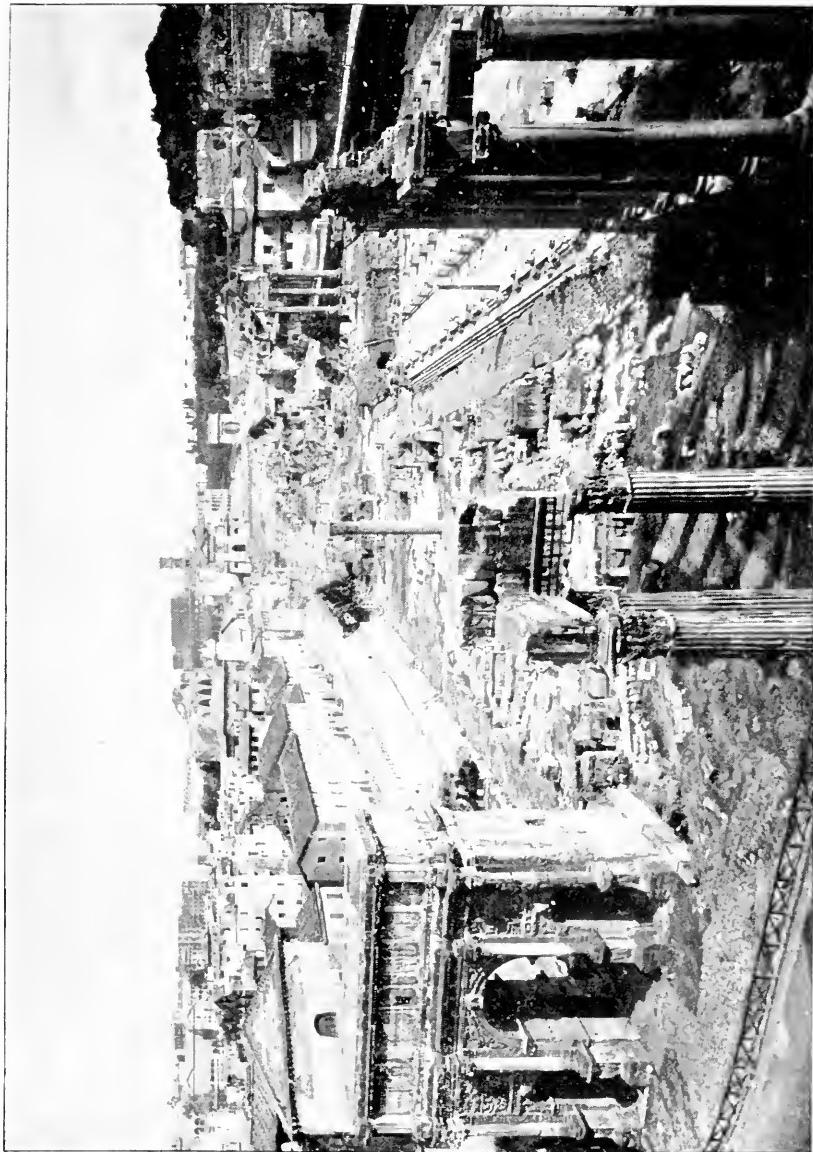


Photo by Linari Brothers.

THE FORUM
(Looking from the Capitol towards the Colosseum.)

heights, and perhaps to some of us, too, even the song of the angels.

And so when I gazed from the steps of the Capitol at the living cypresses on the Palatine Hill that burned their flameless tapers over the bodies of the Cæsars, I was seized with the transfiguring emotion of victory, and I too threw to the winds the words of submission, "Vicisti Galilæe." Yet it is not altogether without a remembrance of our various and vulgar day that one, protected though he be with triple steel, even in Rome may keep the vigil of Christ's birthday.

As I came back with a sickening fall, from the grandiloquent heights and depths of the destiny of man to Christmas Eve of to-day, I found it was near midnight, and that the first Mass of Christmas morning would be almost beginning. So I went towards San Silvestro in Capite. As I gave up my ticket with which it was necessary to be provided as in the days of persecution, I found myself in a splendid church, from which everything that would suggest silence and prayer had been excluded. A great number of people was assembled, almost entirely made up of English and Americans. One was everywhere forbidden to spit, which from the frequency of the injunction one may suppose was necessary. The ceiling was alive with a host of imperious and splendid figures. The image of the Virgin was dressed in rich and magnificent robes, the altar blazed with hundreds of candles, the poor and the Romans sat in humility behind the indomitable Anglo-Saxon.

Here for the first time I, but another pilgrim from that little island of Britain, found a great expectancy, a scarcely veiled excitement: it was Christmas Eve, surely we looked even for Jesus.

Among the innumerable candles in the midst of the altar there hung a little black curtain, about two feet high and as broad too, at which all our world seemed to be gazing. The electric lights were switched on, the organ began to play, and suddenly, as though by magic, that little curtain leapt up, and behold a tiny, rosy *bambino* with arms outstretched towards us. A great sigh as of relief passed over the congregation, and—and Mass began. Ah, but I longed for a darker place and a little silence and space, and not quite so grand a stable for the “*Jesu parvule*”; so I went out. Not that I saw anything so ludicrous as “idolatry” or irreverence in what, after all, perhaps seemed sweet or even beautiful to those people. Nor did I mind the realism; it was not that, but some suggestion of childish make-believe, something that seemed like playing at things that one dared only contemplate as a great mystery, educated, civilised, entirely disillusioned as these English and Americans were—even as I was. There was a touch—nay, more than a touch—of vulgarity in that, as in the dressing of the image of Mary or the use of artificial flowers where real ones would have been entirely in place. Something not quite sincere or simple, that is really in place with the Italian, but that in a church for English people is wrong, pro-

foundly distressing, and to me at least unbearable. Ah, at times Jesus is nearly as unapproachable as the hearts of men.

But for many years—for hundreds of years as it seems to me—I have not really kept Christmas; nor watched by night for any star, nor really rejoiced more at dawn of that day than at the dawn of any other. Yet I remember, yes, in spite of the kind of night that is, how imperceptibly, already closing around my childhood, I remember the simple words of my prayer on Christmas Eve, and how in the earliest, earliest hours of the morning, long, oh, long before dawn, I would creep from my bed, and with the long blind over my head gaze, with an unutterable excitement in my heart, over London for that star that came and stood over the place where the young child was; and when, shivering with cold and excitement, I got back into bed, doubting nothing that I had found it among so many, I too watched with the shepherds over their flocks, and verily and indeed heard the heavenly music. The romance of all that! The cold and the glittering glory of the stars, the danger of wolves, the hysterical amazement, the excitement, the beauty, when the great archangel whose song was taken up by that multitude of the heavenly host shone from heaven; ah! why is all that gone for ever? That was Christmas. Not all the majestic music or sweetness of that midnight mass, and the earliest matins at Santa Maria Maggiore, can bring back Jesus to my

earth as He used to come to me, a little sleepless boy, in the flickering light of the night-light hundreds of years ago.

Is it so with us all? Does Christmas Eve, from being the one unmatchable night of the year, become gradually as we grow older the same dark, senseless period of sleep that had once, for the very songs of the angels, been impossible?

It is perhaps that I am the most unfortunate of mortals. Still in the darkness and the snow the world waits breathless, under a mantle most pure, for the "Desire of all Nations," and I alone so soiled in a world I love have lost my vision, and may only look back with envy and despair on days so different, when as yet there was nothing in me very bad.

No, I cannot think it. I am not the only one who now finds it hard even in Rome to keep awake all through the night of Christmas. I am not the only one who has perhaps doubted or forgotten. I am not the only one either who regrets.

So perhaps through death, but not otherwise, I shall win back to those days hundreds of years ago. But I am so sure, though I hear them sing matins to the old tones at Santa Maria Maggiore, or watch from a great distance ten or fifteen simultaneous Masses at St Peter's, that will be like a city with streets, full of the mist of incense and the flickering of candles and the concourse of men, I shall not win back to those days, nor be one single step nearer to that star, nor find the shepherds in those fields, nor in the darkness

and the cold be sore afraid; but it may be that if I go to a little church in the Via Babuino, where they say old words and old, old prayers in English that I learned hundreds of years ago, and where be sure they will sing “O come, all ye faithful,” to that sweet old Portuguese tune—it may be I shall have courage to come even to the very cradle of that “Jesu parvule” I used to expect so eagerly.

VII.

THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN ROME.

“ Bernardus valles colles Benedictus amabat,
Oppida Franciscus, magnas Ignatius urbes.”

IT would require at the least an entire book to discuss the origin of monasticism properly; for our present purpose a very slight and imperfect sketch of the history of monachism must suffice. Though asceticism probably existed from the first in the Christian Church, it is not until the fourth century that monasticism can be said to have developed from the Anchorites, the first of whom was Paul, 228-341, through the Stylitai, of whom the most famous was Simeon of Antioch, 387-459, and the Cenobites, who dwelt together in community, of whom the first abbas and lawgiver was one Pachomius, who ruled 1400 brothers in eight or nine houses. And in order to understand monasticism in its greater developments, it is necessary before all things to remember that it was the work of laymen and not of the clergy. All the great figures

of these early centuries—Antony, Pachomius, and even Benedict—were laymen. Indeed at this time it was forbidden to a monk to be ordained. And amidst all the hurly-burly of Christendom East and West in those early centuries we find much that appears to us ridiculous and extreme; gangs of fanatics sworn to every sort of excessive asceticism and cruelty, hating or despising the clergy, yet when the opportunity offered ready at the bidding of some ignorant priest to murder and torture all those whom they were unable to understand, crash through the almost illegible pages of the history of the time. The excesses of the Inquisition grow pale and passionless before the orgies of blood, the immense sensualities and crimes of the early Church. For the Church of Christ grew up, her hands already crimsoned in the rivers of blood that she had shed, her eyes flaming with a new cruelty that desired even the blood of the bloodless and immortal statues, since the living hearts of men torn from their mortal bodies were not sufficient to satiate her desires.

It was not till St Benedict came, 480-542, that we find any order or sanity in this immense chaos. The history of his order is for centuries the history of monachism. He was the son of wealthy parents of Nursia in Spoleto, and was educated in Rome. Disgusted, it is said, by the licentiousness of the Roman youth of his day, he fled to the mountains of Subiaco at the age of fifteen. One finds just there perhaps the true explanation of all the nightmare

of the previous Christian centuries. Flight—it was the very first principle, the very spirit of asceticism, of monasticism—flight from the world, from the race of man, so that one might separate oneself from those whom God had already condemned. Fear drove them as the wind drives the sea. And it was fear, that most terrible of all passions, that had driven so many thousands mad with cruelty and the desire for blood, for sacrifice, for the death and mutilation of those who were not afraid. But St Benedict, after many adventures, founded twelve monasteries, placing in each twelve monks with a superior. His order, he says, “is a school in which men learn to serve God.” Well, it was founded on obedience, and began to civilise Europe as well as to convert it. His motto—the motto of his order—was *Pax*. With his advent monasticism proper may be said to have begun. And the Benedictines have always been, and are still, not only the greatest community in the Catholic Church, but its most civilising force, its most cultured class, as it were its aristocracy. Of the five orders of Western Christendom the Benedictine order stands first. Of the three Rules that of St Benedict is the most profound, the most comprehensive. His is the only monastic order proper. The Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Carmelites, the Augustinians, are friars and not monks at all.

The Benedictine order in rather less than five hundred years began to produce branches of black

and white monks and nuns, which are liable to cause confusion to the stranger, unless he clearly understands that these numerous orders are really only Benedictines under other names. Thus we may divide the order somewhat as follows:—

1. The Benedictines Proper, founded in 580, who wear a black habit; these are the original order founded by St Benedict. 2. The Black monks and nuns; and, 3. The White monks and nuns. The Black monks and nuns are as follows: The Vallombrosans of Italy, founded in 1038, and the Silvestrines of Italy, who are monks only, founded in 1230. The White monks and nuns consist of the following orders: The Cistercians of France, founded in 1100, from whom again in 1660 we get the Trappists of France; the Camaldoleses of Italy, founded in 1012, from whom we get in 1272 the Olivetans of Italy, who are monks only; the Carthusians of France, founded in 1086. All these are Benedictines and are under St Benedict's rule, with or without additions peculiar to each sub-order. Thus we see how from time to time in the course of centuries reformers arose to restore the ancient rule in all its strictness when may be it had from one cause or another fallen into disuse or abuse. It will give the reader some idea of the vast strength and power of the Benedictine order if he understands that before the first sub-order was founded the Benedictines held in England alone the monasteries of Westminster, St Albans, Winchester,

Whitby, and Glastonbury, to name no others. To name the monasteries and churches they have held in Italy would fill a small volume. In Rome at the present day, however, they occupy only six houses—namely, the great monastery of S. Anselmo on the Aventine Hill, which is a great international college for the education of monks of the order, at present under a Belgian abbas. It is here that at 9 A.M. on Sundays one may hear mass sung to the old plain-song, a magnificent experience. S. Callisto in Trastevere and S. Ambrogio de' Maxima in the Piazza Mattei are also Benedictine monasteries. There are also three nunneries in the city—namely, S. Maria in Campo Marzio, S. Benedetto in Via Boncampagni (which used to have, and for what I know has now, an English abbess), and St Cecilia in Trastevere. From time to time the Benedictines have occupied more than thirty-seven different monasteries and churches in Rome, among them being S. Maria in Aracœli, S. Gregorio Magno on the Cœlian Hill, and S. Giorgio in Velabro, these two last being the churches of the apostle and the patron saint of the English, and S. Silvestro in Capite, which is now the church of the English-speaking Catholics. S. Agnese Fuori le Mura, S. Maria Sopra Minerva, and S. Bibiana were also at various times in their hands. It should be noted also that the first reform of the Benedictines was that made by William of Aquitaine at Cluny in 910, and it was indirectly from Cluny that in 1119 at Cîteaux the Cistercian order was

founded, not as a separate body from the Benedictine Order, but as a reform of it. It was to Citeaux that St Bernard, "the last of the Fathers," came accompanied by his five brothers and other friends to beg the habit of the Order. At the present time the Cistercians are in occupation of three churches and chapels in Rome—namely, S. Bernardo, in Piazza S. Bernardo, near the railway station; S. Susanna, on the opposite side of the Via Venti Settembre from S. Bernardo; and S. Croce in Gerusalemme. The dress is a white habit and black scapular.

But already S. Romuald of Ravenna in 1012 had founded a house at Camaldoli, close to Arezzo, where a little village of hermitages was built. Mr Montgomery Carmichael in his book 'In Tuscany' has written a delightful chapter on this monastery, now secularised, but well worth a visit. This was the third reform that had arisen within the Benedictine Order. The Camaldoleses are to be found in Rome at S. Ildefonso in Via Sistina and at S. Antonio on the Aventine Hill. The dress is a white habit and white scapular.

The fourth reform was instituted in 1038 by S. Giovanni Gualbertus at Vallombrosa, a place familiar to most people who have visited Florence. The monastery is now secularised, but in Rome you will find the Vallombrosans at S. Prassede on the Esquiline Hill. The habit and scapular are black.

The next reform was the foundation of the great

Order of Carthusians by S. Bruno in 1086. It was he who founded the Grande Chartreuse in the high Alps. In England the houses of the Order were called Charterhouses, as in France Chartreuses, and in Italy Certose. The great school and alms-house, the Charterhouse, was one of their foundations suppressed by Henry VIII. They are famous in the Church for their Rule, which has never been reformed, and in the world for their liqueur, distilled in the Alps, and known in every city in Europe. In Rome they are to be found in the Via Palestro, but there is no monastery; the principal centre of the Order is in France. The dress of the Order is a white habit and white scapular. They are said to wear a hair shirt next the skin.

The Sylvestrians, an unimportant reform founded by Sylvester Gozzolini in 1230, is an Italian Order. It admits monks only. The dress is a blue habit and blue scapular. It is in Austria the Order is mostly found. In Rome they have a house in the Via di S. Stefano.

The Olivetan Order, another small reform wholly Italian in origin and development, was founded by Bernard of Siena in 1319. The convent on Monte Oliveto, not far from Siena, was suppressed in 1870, and has practically been turned into an hotel where one may live very fairly for 5 lire a-day. Mr and Mrs Pennell in their book, 'An Italian Pilgrimage,' have written a charming account of their sojourn with the few remaining monks in that curiously lonely spot.

The Abbate di Negro, however, died in 1897, mourned by many who had experienced his courtesy and kindness and who loved him. He was of the family of St Catherine, the Seraph of Genoa. In Rome the Order will be found at St Francis Church in the Forum. The dress is a white habit and scapular.

We now come to the Order about which there is so much vulgar curiosity. The Trappists are really a reform of the Cistercian Order. They were founded as late as 1660 by the Abbé de Rancé. His abbey, La Trappe, founded in 1140, was a Cistercian monastery. The discipline of La Trappe—how often one hears the phrase together with an adventurous explanation wholly inaccurate. It is true that silence is considered as a spiritual necessity among the Trappists, but it is wholly untrue that when they speak they dismally murmur, "Brother, we must die." After a rather large experience of the Religious Orders of the Catholic Church, I find that I am chiefly impressed by the extraordinary cheerfulness, more especially of the monks, whom one might expect perhaps to find unspeakably sad. But it is not so. Their point of view is so different from that of the ordinary man living in the world that it is impossible to judge of them by the same standard. A very excellent account of a Trappist monastery as seen from the inside may be found in J. K. Huysman's '*En Route.*' In Rome the Trappists will be found at Tre Fontane, which they have redeemed from the malaria partly by means of plantations of eucalyptus

trees. The dress of the Order is white with a black scapular.

Having given this utterly inadequate account of the monastic Orders, it is necessary to turn for a few moments to the friars—a very different body of men. The three great names among the friars are those of St Francis, St Dominic, and St Teresa.

The friars, of whom perhaps the best known type is St Francis of Assisi and the Franciscans, whom we shall consider later, are different from monks in many things. Their first aim is not so much the service of God as of man. They are not so much contemplatives as preachers; they are not inclosed as the monk really is, but are pilgrims through the world. It is perhaps necessary to remind the English reader, who is usually never so much at sea as when trying to understand the Religious Orders of the Catholic Church, that the Dominicans are not monks but friars. It is from St Dominic that the Dominicans get their Rule. A Spaniard, born in Old Castille in 1170, twelve years before St Francis of Assisi, he founded his Order in 1215—an Order which has indeed proved to be the watch-dog of the Church. The enterprise he set on foot was chiefly missionary. He was a son of the noble house of Guzmani, and was educated at Salamanca. In 1198 he went, together with the Bishop of Osma, to arrange a marriage between Prince Ferdinand of Castille and the daughter of the Earl of La Marche.

Passing through Languedoc, where the Albigensian heresy was rife, he is said to have converted completely the owner of the house where he lodged in the course of a single night. And it would seem that this experience coloured his whole life, setting an ideal before him of which he never lost sight. The Pope somewhat reluctantly gave him leave to return to Languedoc, whence in reality he set out to conquer the world. And it was during this missionary enterprise in Languedoc that St Dominic composed the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary—a series of prayers designed really to remind the world of the birth of our Saviour. And it was in Languedoc, too, in 1215, that he established his order of Preaching Friars. Setting out for Rome in 1216 to get his Order established by the Pope, he was present at the Fourth Council at the Lateran, when the rule of confession once at the least in each year before receiving the Eucharist at Easter was enjoined on the faithful. In 1218 he returned to Spain, to Segovia, where he founded a convent; and we find his convents and monasteries already, even at that date, in England, France, Italy, Ireland, Germany, Greece, Norway, Sweden, and the near East. He died at Bologna, August 6, 1221, of a summer fever, after returning from a mission to Florence.

Of all religious orders that of St Dominic has remained the most at one with itself. There appear to have been no reforms, no branches

springing from the Dominicans. They have ever worked together, under a discipline as sound as that of the Society of Jesus. The dress of the Order is white as to habit and scapular, covered by a black cloak and hood—the *cappa nigra*. In Rome the Dominicans will be found at S. Clemente (Irish), S. Sabina, and on Monte Mario. There is also a nursing order of English Dominican sisters in Via Napoli. Their General lives at S. Maria Sopra Minerva, where St Catherine of Siena, their greatest saint, lies buried under the high altar. St Thomas Aquinas, whom Leo XIII. loves so dearly, was a great Dominican; as also St Rose of Lima, the Mystic, and St Peter Martyr.

The life of St Francis of Assisi is known to everyone almost, certainly to everyone who has any pretensions to education. In him we seem to see Christ on earth again. The knight of Lady Poverty, he has fascinated a world with the beauty of holiness. His few poor brothers have multiplied till in every city of Italy they are of all sorts and conditions of men the most frequently met with. And even as the ideal of St Benedict appears always to be intellectual, so the ideal of St Francis is emotional, is, in its founder at least, just love. To read “The Little Flowers of St Francis” is to catch a glimpse of heaven. His rule, approved by Pope Honorius III. in 1223, appears only to have been accepted by those in authority because of a supposed miracle. Pope Innocent III., who in 1210 had provisionally approved the rule, did so in

spite of the decision of the Church to create no new order, because of a dream in which he saw a little poor man in a brown frock supporting the Lateran Church which was falling. St Mary of the Angels at Assisi, given to St Francis by the Benedictines, has since 1870 been taken from the Franciscans by a government that is already perjured beyond any redemption. That is not the least of its crimes. The Franciscan Order, however, early divided into two branches because of the severity of the original vow of poverty. For this rule was not only applied to the individual but to the Order itself as an Order, so that the Franciscans could hold no property or money either privately or in common. The two branches into which the Order was divided were the Observants and the Conventuals. The Observants, with whom S. Bernardino of Siena will ever be associated, tried to keep the strict Franciscan rule of poverty. The Conventuals compromised with the flesh in this matter. The Observants, however, in various countries passed under different names and under separate government; but in 1897 Leo XIII. re-formed them all into one Order, called the Ordo Minorum, under which splendid and ancient name may they long flourish.

The Cappuccini, another reform instituted by the Observant Matteo of Urbino, are still in existence, however. They wear the original pointed hood supposed to have been designed by St Francis himself. These Cappuccini are perhaps the strictest

Order of the three. They are really as poor as church mice, whom they much resemble. Even the ornaments of their churches are without intrinsic value, and they beg their bread. Thus we see the First Order, at the present day, divided into three branches—namely, Friars Minor, Cappuchins, and Conventuals.

The Second Order, founded in 1212 by St Clare, who loved St Francis, is for women. St Francis gave her a Rule in 1224, confirmed in 1246 by Innocent IV. Their rule is probably stricter than any observed by the friars.

There is a Third Order, which consists of those who, while living in the world, desire to conform their lives as much as possible to the rule of St Francis. These tertiaries, as they are called, recite every day the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Rosary. They wear a tiny scapular under their clothes, and are buried in the habit of the Order.

The Friars Minor are to be found in Rome at the Church of S. Antonio,¹ which was inaugurated December 1887. It has been built entirely “by the Franciscan friars of Italy, who each gave the price of two masses weekly. There are 13,000 friars, and about 26,000 lire were paid weekly.” S. Maria in Aracoeli also belongs to them, together with S. Sebastiano in Via Appia, S. Pietro in Montorio, S. Francesco a Ripa, the convent of which was turned

¹ See Hare, Walks in Rome, vol. ii. 82.

into a barracks by the Sardinian Government.¹ A room is shown there in which St Francis lived.

The Conventuals are to be found at SS. Apostoli and at S. Dorotea.

The Cappuccini are to be found at the Cappuccini in Piazza Barberini Via Veneto.

The dress of the Franciscans is made of a coarse woollen stuff, confined round the waist by a cord. The Friars Minor wear a deep red-brown habit and long cape or cloak, together with a small round hood of the same colour, and white cord for the waist. The Conventuals wear a black habit and short cape, a rosary, white cord for the waist, and a priest's hat. The Cappuccini wear a brown habit, with a long pointed hood, a short cape reaching only just below the waist, round which is a white cord and a hanging rosary; they also are, as a rule, unshaven, wearing a long beard and moustache. The Conventuals alone wear shoes, the Friars Minor and the Cappuccini being practically barefoot. The Poor Clares wear a brown habit and cloak, and a black veil; they, too, are practically barefoot; around the waist is the usual white cord.

The Order of Mount Carmel, about which, had it not been for St Teresa, perhaps the greatest of all the mystical saints, there would have been but little to say, is said to follow the Rule of the prophet Elijah. However that may be, we find a Calabrian, Berthold by name, founding a hermitage on Mount Carmel in

¹ See Hare, Walks in Rome, vol. ii. 256.

the twelfth century, and in 1209 the Patriarch of Jerusalem, whose name has escaped me, gave him a Rule that was confirmed by Pope Honorius III. (he who approved the Rule of St Francis) in 1224. In 1247 Pope Innocent IV. appears to have changed the rule and re-formed the Order under the name of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The Order owes everything to St Teresa, who, finding it in a condition of considerable feebleness in 1562, re-formed it. It is impossible to speak adequately of St Teresa in a few lines; I will therefore content myself with referring the reader to Alban Butler's "Life," in his 'Lives of the Saints,' or to her own works, her Autobiography, and her 'Interior Castle.' Here it will be sufficient to state that, excepting St Catherine of Siena, no more profoundly reasonable and practical a woman ever lived. It is a vulgar error to think of her as always in an hysterical ecstasy. She destroyed the Protestant reformation or revolution in Spain by her magnificent work, and even confused her fellow-Catholics, and more especially her confessors, by the originality of her ideas. Her enthusiasm was genius, it consumed everything—herself, too, at last. A profound mystic, in which science she has never been surpassed, she was the friend and counsellor of St John of the Cross, who to some extent carried on her work—though he was perhaps more entirely a mystic, with less real genius. She, unlike St John, never allowed herself to be consumed by despair and melancholy. Having practically revivified religion in Spain

and founded thirty-two houses for men and women, she died, being sixty-seven years old, in 1582. She is buried at Avila.

Her Rule is beautiful—a kind of “government by love.” Such as are sick are to “sleep in linen and have good beds,” such as are in health on straw. Clean linen is one of the signs of her sons and daughters, the latter it is said being allowed even a flask of eau-de-Cologne in their cells. The dress is a brown habit and scapular, together with a white cloak. In Rome they are to be found at S. Maria della Vittoria, in Via Venti Settembre, where there is a group by Bernini,¹ representing St Teresa killed by the Angel of Death, inordinately admired by M. Habert in M. Zola’s ‘Rome.’ In spite of M. Zola’s irony, however, Bernini’s peculiar genius is not quite so diseased as he suggests. One may at least admire Bernini without compromising St Teresa. The Carmelite nuns are found at various churches and convents in the city.

Having now very briefly and inadequately put before the reader a few facts regarding the Religious Orders proper, there remain to be considered still more briefly, and therefore more inadequately, the Sisters of Charity of all rules, the “Clerks Regular,” who include the Jesuits, and such Canons and Friars and Congregations as the Augustinians, the Trinitarians, the Passionists, and a host

¹ Hare, Walks in Rome, vol. ii. 30. Mrs Jameson, Monastic Orders, p. 421.

of others. The reader is possibly already utterly confused. It is only with a certain amount of pains that he can arrive at last at a clear understanding of such a multitude of religious. For it is in the Religious Orders that we see the greatness, the immensity of Rome. It is probably impossible to say how many thousands, it may be millions, of human beings are devoted to the cause of Christ and the Church under the strict rule of some greater or lesser Order. When one begins to consider then their work in all Italy, in Spain, in France, in Germany, even in England and America, one is confronted by a fact too often forgotten in England — namely, the tremendous power of the Roman Catholic faith over the hearts of men.

It is really to St Vincent de Paul that Europe owes the inestimable blessing of the Sisters of Charity, for about the year 1630 he instituted a confraternity “of Charity, to attend all poor sick persons in each parish; which institute he began in Bresse and propagated in other places; one called Of the Dames of the Cross for the education of young girls, another of Dames to serve the sick in great hospitals, as in that of Hôtel Dieu in Paris. He procured and directed the foundation of several great hospitals, as in Paris that of Foundlings, and that of poor old men; at Marseilles, the stately hospital for the galley-

slaves, who when sick are there abundantly furnished with every help both corporal and spiritual.” Thus far Alban Butler. Strictly speaking the Sisters of Charity are not Religious. They number some 30,000, and are engaged both in education and in tending the sick. In Rome they are to be found in the Via S. Nicola da Tolentino, in the Via di S. Maria in Capella, and in other places. Their dress is a blue habit with a white linen head-dress and collar; they carry a rosary.

In 1799 the Sisters of Charity suffered a reform from which grew a branch called the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul; their dress is grey with a white head-dress, over which is a black veil. Their work is of a similar nature to that of the Sisters of Charity. In Rome they have many houses, the chief being in the Bocca della Verita.

Amongst St Vincent’s immense works must be mentioned the foundation of the Lazarists, a congregation of seculars who make four vows—namely, those of Poverty, Chastity, Stability, and Obedience. “They devote themselves,” says Alban Butler, “to labour, to the conversion of sinners to God, and to the training of the clergy.”

The Sisters of Charity are not to be confused with the Little Sisters of the Poor, who are a foundation of the nineteenth century, and again French in origin. Their dress is black, with a hood and large cloak. In Rome they may be

found in Piazza S. Pietro in Vincoli, and they are famous not only in Europe but in England also.

There are beside these two very famous Sisterhoods more than sixty others which are at the least represented in Rome, though in many cases their chief work lies abroad. It is not possible even to name all these: some are of English origin, as the Dames Anglaises founded by Mary Ward, 1585-1603, and the Poor Servants of the Mother of God Incarnate who hold the Church of St George and the English Martyrs in Piazza di Spagna, and The Little Company of Mary, who at their house in Via Castelfidardo receive invalid or infirm gentlewomen. Some are French, some German, some Spanish, some Austrian. From hearts in all the world Rome has drawn love and devotion: it is not perhaps till one realises the charities of the Catholic Church that one remembers how many there are to be sorry for.

We now come to those numerous bodies of Canons and Friars, such as the Augustinians—canons, hermits, and oblates, and the Trinitarians.

The Augustinians are orders founded or said to have been founded by St Augustine. The canons appear to have the best claim to that honour. The history of the hermits, however, is interesting, but so indistinct that at the most we can be sure that whatever their origin it was of no great account. The authors of ‘Christian and Ecclesiastical Rome’

thus very clearly sum up the known history of the hermits :¹—

The Augustinians or Austin Friars, although now classed among Mendicants, are really an order of hermits. They trace their origin to St Augustine, and to the year 388, in Tagaste, when that Father united some friends in a house near the church, and lived with them according to a Rule. The canons, however, declare that Augustine merely gave some rules for African solitaries with a view to regulating their life, and the controversy between the canons and the hermits as to which were genuine Augustinians had to be silenced by Sixtus IV. It is certain, at least, that Alexander IV. (following Innocent IV.) collected together the numerous hermits scattered through Europe, and united them under the Rule of St Augustine. In 1567 Pius V. aggregated them with Mendicant Friars.

Their dress is a black habit with a cape pointed behind, and a leathern belt around the waist ; they wear a priest's hat.

The Trinitarians are an order of friars founded in the twelfth century by Jean de Matha, a Frenchman, for the purpose of redeeming slaves and captives. The full name of the order is the Order of the Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives. In Rome they will be found at the little church of the Trinità in Via Condotti. Their dress is white, with a fairly ample black cloak ; on the breast they wear a cross, the perpendicular in red, the horizontal in blue.

The Jesuits, the Theatines, and the Barnabites

¹ Christian and Ecclesiastical Rome, part iii. p. 214.

are the best known of the Clerks Regular. The Passionists, so well known in England, and one or two other congregations out of a total of something like forty, I will briefly describe later.

The Society of Jesus, founded in 1534 by St Ignatius of Loyola, is really the heir of the Dominicans, who in their turn were the heirs of the Benedictines, in the education of Europe.

St Ignatius was born in 1491, and was the heir to a most ancient and noble Spanish family. Martin Luther, the arch-revolutionary of the age, was a child of eight years old when Ignatius was born, and so these two seem to have come into the world for mortal combat, and the result is perhaps still in doubt. Wounded while holding the town of Pampeluna in Navarre in 1520, Ignatius read the 'Lives of the Saints,' and thereupon decided to devote his whole life to the Blessed Virgin as her knight. After many adventures he came toMontserrat, where he formally dedicated himself to the Divine service. As a pilgrim thence he came almost starved to Manresa, where he remained in a convent of Dominicans for a whole year. Thence he journeyed to Barcelona, and from there to Italy and Rome, and eventually to Venice, whence he set out for Palestine, arriving in Jerusalem in September 1523.

In 1524 he returned to Venice and Barcelona, and with an idea of acquiring the education necessary to one who would be a priest, he journeyed

to Paris, not without having suffered persecution from the Church for his extraordinary asceticism. He stayed in Paris for three years, finding a friend in Peter Faber, who from being his master in the arts becomes his disciple in religion. It was in Paris also that he met Francis Xavier. On the Feast of the Assumption in 1534 Ignatius founded that Society of Jesus of which the world has heard so much. Having determined on this, he and his friend immediately set out for Rome, where Paul III., in a Bull of September 27, 1540, approved the new Society. The head of the Jesuits is called their general, and if one examines the Society at all closely it is as an army it appears, in which each single personality is sacrificed so that the machine itself may be efficient. The chief teaching of the new order was Obedience, their chief business hearing confessions. Unlike every other order within the Catholic Church, they were forbidden by their founder to wear a distinctive dress; they were to appear as other priests, or to adopt the dress of the country where they might be. As missionaries they have been marvellously successful even in the East. Though they have been expelled from every country in Europe at one time or another, the vulgar prejudice against them as teachers of the doctrine that "one may do evil that good may come" appears to be utterly without foundation. Yet there is much which culture and good taste at least may bring against them. Their

learning has not availed to save them from a gross vulgarity, and in their churches one may generally be sure of seeing more bad taste in decoration and music than elsewhere. As educators they are probably without equals. So long ago as the reign of James II. in England they were sought after as teachers even of Protestant youth. In Rome they may be found in all their gilt and vulgar splendour at Il Gesù, and the Collegio Romano is in their charge. Their general is to be found at Fiesole near Florence—popularly he is known as the Black Pope.

The Theatines were founded in 1524 by the Archbishop of Teatà, afterwards Pope Paul IV., partly with the object, in which they failed, of insisting on the personal poverty of the clergy. In Rome they may be found at the church of S. Andrea della Valle, where is a miraculous picture of the Blessed Virgin.

The Barnabites, who are also Clerks Regular and not a Congregation, were founded about 1533 and called after their church in Milan, which was dedicated to St Barnabas. Their chief work is education. Their dress is a black habit or cassock, together with a black sash, a priest's hat, and collar.

The Passionists are a Congregation founded by St Paul of the Cross, who lived 1694-1775. The chief design of St Paul in founding this Congregation was the conversion of England, for which country he had a great love. The Passionists are so called from the fact that one of their vows is

"To keep alive for ever in the hearts and minds of the Faithful a memory of the Passion of our Lord." They came to England in the 'Forties. Father Dominic, who received Cardinal Newman into the Roman Church in 1845, was a Passionist Father. Their dress consists of a black habit and a heavy black cloak. On the cloak, and on the left breast, is a white heart, three nails, and the words, "Jesu Christi Passio," crowned with a cross. Around the waist is a belt of leather. They also wear a rosary, sandals, and a priest's hat. In Rome they may be found on the Cœlian Hill at the Church of SS. Giovanni and Paolo.

Thus we have seen, in utterly inadequate fashion, it is true, but still we have seen something of the vast organisation of the Catholic Church. It is not among the secular priests that we shall find the real strength of the Church, at any rate in Italy, but in her Religious. Such of them as I have known personally, and always by chance, have been simple and holy men, whose one idea was the service of God or of His poor. Their lives are not susceptible of the coarser joys that we experience, taken up with life as we are and only fearful of death. They, more simple by far, think of death as the valley down which they must travel to meet their Love. Is this the reason of their cheerfulness? I have never in all my life met a melancholy monk; they all seem inspired by a great gladness, that it may be the world does not desire to notice.

VIII.

PLAIN-SONG ON THE AVENTINE HILL.

IT is curious that in the great capital of Christianity it should be so difficult to hear good music. Coming to Rome from London, where a great revival of music seemed on the point of being achieved in the English Church, it was with profound disappointment that, after weeks of searching and hope deferred, I remembered that in Rome the most one could hope for was to avoid M. Gounod and his erotics.

Never shall I forget the immense and futile services at Il Gesù. Lasting as they did for many hours, decorated as they were with every sort of meretricious furbelow that it is possible for music to bear, they seemed to bear witness, not to the cunning or adaptability of the Society of Jesus, but to its unmeasured vulgarity; for the choir of men, to which was added a few *castrati*, was noisy, and in the intervals of singing chatted and spat without mercy; while the large and magnificent church, hung with glass chandeliers of the most

frightful, surrounded by altars decorated with outrageous artificial flowers, seemed at least in keeping with the music. And again on December 31, at Vespers and Benediction, this immense church was filled with people, English and American visitors and tourists, Germans and Frenchmen, and innumerable Romans, who for more than three hours listened to the efforts of two organs and a choir, while a small army of attendants lighted hundreds of candles all over the church. As the nearer of the two organs was some eighty feet above the priests, and some forty or fifty feet away, the organ and choir were invariably half a bar or so in front of the priest, which added to the immense wonder of the whole musical performance.

But it is not in Il Gesù alone that one is astonished at the taste of the Romans in Church music. At St Peter's, though it is occasionally possible to hear Palestrina and the old masters, it is more frequently some atrocious concoction of a modern, sung by voices that seem like splintering glass or shrieking steel, that one hears. And on many a night of December I have wended my way about five o'clock down the Via Condotti to a little poor church, just before one comes to the Corso, named the Trinità, where children sing the magnificent litany of the Blessed Virgin to an old eighteenth century air, almost a dance measure, in which the Virgin bows in acquiescence and in answer to each "Ora pro nobis." The voices of the children were

rather rough, and the priest somewhat old and uncertain, but in the very simplicity of the children and the utterly poor folk who came there I found something of that æsthetic sincerity which was a stranger to Il Gesù, and which, it may be, Bach was the last composer to understand or feel. It was during one of those sudden and sad evenings of December that I became acquainted with a Roman Catholic gentleman whom I had noticed invariably in the same place in this little church, before a picture of the Blessed Virgin, where a slender taper was always burning. One night, on our leaving the church together, he courteously held back the heavy leathern curtain for me, and introduced himself. It seemed that he, like myself, was a lover of the old music, and especially of Plain-song, the which he professed himself willing to walk any distance to hear well sung. I lamented that it seemed impossible to find Plain-song well or ill sung in Rome. "Have you searched the monasteries?" said he. I replied that I had not, as I supposed it was necessary to be introduced. "If you will meet me next Sunday morning," said he, "at eight o'clock, at the bottom of the Spanish steps in the Piazza di Spagna, you shall hear a Plain-song Mass sung as you have probably never heard it before." I thanked him and promised to be there.

On the following Sunday morning I was at my post to the minute, and we set off down the Via di Propaganda, through the Piazza di San Silvestro into

the Corso, to the Piazza Venezia, and from there to the Capitol, which we crossed, passing down the steps into the Via della Consolazione. The Forum, with its fringe of churches and temples of a forgotten religion, lay below us in the sunshine, strewn with the immortal limbs of the old gods, while the bells sounded from innumerable cupolas, telling us that Christ was at that moment descended to their altars. My friend, seeming to read my thoughts—the inevitable Roman thoughts that overcome the stranger—smiled. “It was in these temples,” said he, “now so ruinous, that the Plain-song was born, or at least grew up, coming to us Romans it may be from Egypt, in the train of some victorious emperor, or with the religion and priests of Isis or some other religion; for Plain-song is as old as the world itself almost, and to us at least,” he said, smiling again, “the only real music, for once having heard it, you will forsake everything for it at last. There are more than one in the monastery to which I am taking you, who, having become enamoured of the Plain chant, have forsaken the world in order to devote their lives to its study in that place where alone it can be properly understood or studied at all, a Benedictine monastery.” As we passed the old Temple of Vesta and came out beside Tiber, where of old the Marmorata had received the precious marbles of the world, the golden-tinted blocks from Greece, and the white rocks from the quarries of Luna, all the strength of Republican Rome and the red years of

the Empire seemed to come back to me up that old river through which Cæsar himself had swam in the depth of winter. But my companion continued, "It is just here we must turn off, for, as you have doubtless already guessed, it is to Sant' Anselmo, the new monastery on the Aventine, that we are going for Mass."

Far above us on the hill rose the tower of the monastery, and even as we turned up the Via Sabina the bell began to ring. A large garden surrounds the monastery, which rises brand new from among the old trees of the wooded Aventine, the youngest son of Rome, a Religious, vowed to God. Begun in 1892, Sant' Anselmo was practically finished in 1896. It has been built by Leo XIII. as a college for "Black Benedictines" of every nation. An Abbas Primas, nominated by the Pope for ten years, is the head of the college, which is entirely international, this fact being emphasised by the appointment of Abbé Hemptinne, a Belgian,—not an Italian,—as Abbas Primas. After passing through the great gates and along a short gravelled drive we came to a shady cloister, in the midst of which was a great marble basin in which were some gold fish. To our left were the main buildings of the monastery, in front of us the church. As we opened the door a brother came forward and motioned us very courteously towards a long bench set against the west wall of the nave. The church is very broad and simple, the choir being larger than the chancel and nave together.

Over the high altar, which seemed to be the only altar in the church, is a great baldachino of marble. There was no decoration of any sort about the church save such as the architect had carved in the stone and brick. The altar was very simple, and so soon as Mass began six candles were lighted, and there was a blessed absence of artificial flowers. More than any other church in Rome it reminded one of home; in its simple and unadorned beauty it was more like an English church of the seventeenth century than anything I had seen in Rome. The monks, some four or five hundred (I should say), sat in choir in the black robe of the Order, as in a college chapel, facing north and south. The music, which was sung in unison, without harmony of any sort, was unaccompanied, what appeared to be a small harmonium, somewhere out of sight, giving the note; otherwise the male voice was the only instrument used. The opening psalms were not sung, but as it were declaimed, with a pause of a full second at the colon in each verse. At the Gloria Patri all faced the altar, bending very low, almost double indeed. It was admirable, this method of chanting the psalms giving to them a kind of beautiful monotony or eternity that suggested an incantation. My friend and I were the only persons present with the monks, and we remained alone through all that matchless service.

The Kyrie was sung to an exquisite and simple tune of the old Plain-song that changed with the Christi eleison and again for the last three Kyrie

eleison. The cry of humanity seemed to have lost something of its bitterness, to carry within itself some assurance of being heard; and as these hundreds of men's voices, clear and limpid with some suggestion, some tone in them never heard in the voices of those in the world, rose in magnificent unison, I knew that I had found it at last, the true Plain-song, that is the elder sister to Fra Angelico's triptyches, fulfilled with the desire to express worship and that only. With a gracious swiftness that suggested attention, the loins being girt and the mind ready and anxious for the accomplishing of some mystery or miracle, the service proceeded. Here there was no elaboration of that which was already perfectly adequate. The Gloria in Excelsis, sung to a magnificent old tune, in a kind of antiphon between those who were appointed as Cantors and the rest of the college, seemed almost for the first time to be the real song of the angels announcing to the world the "glad tidings of great joy," the sweet advent of the Eucharist. Amid those lights in the sunshine, that streamed into the church, soon, ah! soon, we too might look for Jesus, even as the shepherds of old, nor does the world marvel the less at our story than at theirs.

Through the half-open door came the sound of a fountain, that seemed to rise with the irresistible exaltation of the music. "Quoniam tu solus sanctus: tu solus Dominus: tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christo cum sancto spiritu in Gloria Dei Patris. Amen."

Ah! after the certainty of that chant there was no need of those indecent and prolonged repetitions that have made the liturgy a kind of ridiculous nonsense verse, a kind of intricate jugglery with words. Sung straight through, certain from the beginning of its message, it was as though faith had suddenly become incarnate in the heart, as though the music had retained for the words the immortality that had been stolen from them by the scepticism of bad music and musicians that have loved many women. Far beyond the music of love, with its entrancing and sensuous passion, beyond the dear dreams of Mozart, and the profound trouble and discontent of Beethoven, in a region of which the tinselled music of Gounod never dreamed, the Plain-song, the music of worship, has preserved the very essence of Christianity, its humility, its faith, its immortal claim on the heart and the intelligence.

The Credo, sung by all in unison, became not a mere statement of more or less doubtful facts but a very hymn of triumph, not without joy. It passed as swiftly as a procession gay with banners and the implements of war, displayed for their splendour and their beauty. One stood instinctively all the while with a kind of eagerness, so real was this magnificent and old story become under the inspiration of the life-giving chant, reaching at last a homely and perfect assurance almost, as at the mention of the name of one's birthplace in a far land. “Et unam sanctam Catholicam et

Apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen."

What a solemn character, not without a kind of joy, a kind of ecstasy, has the Plain chant! Those "discreet embraces," that are given at the Communion, seem perfectly in place, some new kind of Love having suddenly been born into the world, and the music has spoken to us even in its most profound rhapsody of thanksgiving. The Agnus Dei, sung to the Plain chant, seems no mere heartfelt petition, but the very ecstatic song of the resurrection. What the later musicians, yes, even Palestrina and Vittoria, have made of the liturgy is something very different from that most precious commemoration of Love concealed and preserved in the Plain-song. And while all the world has followed the lighter and more sensuous tunes, the sons of St Benedict, scholars as they are, have been content with the beauty that is older than their mighty founder, that has for ages, it may be ere Christ came to save the world, captured the hearts of men for God. And we too, who desire not a fair thing, but the fairest of all, are content that the Jesuits should draw thousands and tens of thousands by the vulgarity that appeals so strongly to multitudes, so long as there is a refuge in the Benedictine abbeys of the world, and not least on the Aventine Hill.

"Lucus Aventino suberat niger ilicis umbra
Quo posses viso dicere, Numen inest."

IX.

AT NAPLES.

IN one gift Naples is supreme over all the cities of Italy, nay, over all the cities of the world, without the exception even of Madrid, namely, in noise. To me, at least, Naples is full of terror and indescribable horror or disgust. It is not merely the noise, which to some extent at least may be avoided, but a kind of animalism I find in her, that seems to have destroyed the spirit or driven it mad. Civilisation appears to have been swept away suddenly in some terrible disaster, and man finds himself with a number of his mechanical contrivances back in the horror of a strange unfortunate age in which his soul was heavy with chains.

Of her famous Museum the whole world has ever been envious. Bronzes, mosaics, statues, sculpture: in each department her treasures are almost innumerable. Within these solemn corridors Madame Venus Kallipyge dwells, and receives her admirers; the bronzes and frescoes of Pompeii have been collected here in bewildering abundance. The British Consul,

Mr E. Neville Rolfe, has edited and translated ‘A Complete Handbook to the Naples Museum,’ from the original work by Signor Domenico Monaco. No more adequate guide exists. The traveller cannot do better than buy it. The price is but three francs. But for the tourist, who differs considerably from the traveller, there is little to see in Naples when once he has raced through the museum. For him remain the long excursions—which are as comfortable as may be with the aid of Messrs Cook—to Pompeii, to Vesuvius, to Sorrento, to Capri and Castellammare, and, farther yet, to Amalfi and Salerno and the Temples at Pæstum, on the south-east; while on the north-west are Pozzuoli and Cumæ and Baiæ and the great Cape of Misenum. Much the most interesting excursions are those to Pompeii and to Pæstum; much the most beautiful is that to Castellammare by train, with the drive to Sorrento. All these places the traveller will visit at his leisure; but the tourist, goaded on by time and his inexorable desire, must plan prodigiously and economise sleep. A few suggestions as to the best way to negotiate a peculiarly difficult piece of country may not be out of place in a work so un-practical as this.

So long as Naples itself remains unseen, live in Naples, if possible in one of the hotels above the city on the Corso Vittorio Emanuele. When the traveller is tired of Naples, before he makes any of the longer excursions, and before he has been to

Pompeii more than once, but after he has visited Pozzuoli, Cumæ, and Baiæ, let him go either to Castellammare, where there is a good hotel—Hotel Quisisana—or to Sorrento, to which he must drive from Castellammare. From either of these places he will find it easier, pleasanter, and less fatiguing to visit Pompeii and Capri than from Naples, and he will be able to enjoy at his leisure the delightful country. From Castellammare or Sorrento he should proceed to Salerno, from which place Amalfi and Pæstum may be most easily visited. The drive from Salerno to Amalfi is an especially splendid piece of engineering, and should please the Englishman; while the journey, partly by train, from Salerno to Pæstum is nothing compared with the journey from Naples to Pæstum and back in one day. Since it is impossible to sleep at Pæstum on account of fever, this extremely tiring journey is usually undertaken.

To return now to Naples herself. Her beauty, chiefly of situation, has from the beginning been praised by the poets, and has passed into a commonplace. From Virgil, who sings—

“*Ilo Virgilium me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope, studiis florentem ignobilis oti,*”

to the innumerable song-writers whose sweet unintelligible words strike on the ear of the traveller everywhere in the country round Naples and in the city herself, all have conspired together to pronounce Naples beautiful in every language of the world. Yet Naples herself, to one traveller at least, is not beauti-

ful, save perhaps from one point of view. It is her situation on a noble and magnificent bay, under a soft and ineffable sky, on the shores of the midland sea, that has brought to her her fame. And even as she is to be seen from the sea in early morning, when she is lovely indeed, I protest Genoa is not less beautiful. Circumstances, however, have conspired to throw over Naples a mantle of romance. Vesuvius guards her with his artillery; many Cæsars have slept beside her. So to the world that has not seen her she remains the ever enchanting mistress, compelling the longing thoughts of strangers, a true Siren, from whom perhaps we shall receive not Death but Disillusion. Yet even to-day

“*Semiputata tibi frondosa vitis in ulmo est,*”

and we, too, can perhaps catch the spirit of the south wind with Virgil when he says—

“*Atque equidem, extremo ni jam sub fine laborum
Vela traham, et terris festinem advertere proram,
Forsitan et pingues hortos quæ cura colendi
Ornaret, canerem, biferique rosaria Pæsti.*”

The twice blossoming roses of Pæstum—ah! they are gone with the years: no roses bloom now beside the lonely and desolate temples of that eternal but forgotten religion; only in the mind of a solitary traveller they bloom across the plain as never before, golden and red and white.

But I think in all Naples the chiefest sight is the Neapolitans. One is never tired of watching them

either in the Toledo or on Santa Lucia. Gay and full of spirit, they are the perfect example of the happiness to be found in sunshine and blue sky. Poor they not seldom are beyond our dreams, yet never with our melancholy. They take no thought for the morrow while it is to-day. Enough for them that the Saints are still in heaven, and not yet the Padre Eterno has bidden themselves return from the earth. Even their own misfortunes will amuse them, they will laugh while they watch themselves starve. They will sing or play the mandolin for you while they know not where they will sleep or sup. Their betters are like to them. After the Races they will drive in the Toledo with every sort of magnificence, their carriages flaming with their arms and crests, their servants before and sometimes behind too, themselves covered with jewels, and it may very well be without a shirt on their backs or a soldo in their purses. They will sacrifice everything to outdo one another in display, they will starve themselves for a week in order to be envied on the eighth day. Their cruelty to their beasts has, I think, been exaggerated, and is at any rate in many cases only an exuberance of spirits. They are, however, utterly without mercy, even to their favourite Saints, whom they will curse as heartily as they will bless, with as great a contempt as at another time reverence. Be sure they will cheat you if they can, either with bad money or by sharp practice. Trust none further than you can see him, and not so far if you can help it. They

are not greater gamblers than the English, I think, but they are as great with less excuse. The Government lottery, which is more flourishing in Naples than elsewhere, is only another example of the ridiculous venality of the Italian Government. The Government benefits to the extent of many millions a year from this institution—in fact, without it it is doubtful that the State could be carried on. That they speak among themselves more by signs than by words is a commonplace that is scarcely true. It is not that they use fewer words—far from it—but that they use more gesticulation. Less civilised than ourselves perhaps, the Neapolitan is at least never vulgar in our fashion. He may be a villain, but he is a courteous one; he may be a thief, but he steals politely; he may murder you for much less than a lira, but he does it with perfect grace. Even his curses sound magnificent. Altogether he is not to be despised. Yet his brother Italians do despise him heartily—chiefly because he is not industrious. Of all Italians he is the only one who is not, and curious as it may seem, in spite of the bad government and hideous tyranny under the late Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, he is the very person who most ardently desires the return of the old kings.

In art he has never been very great—most of that which he possesses he has found or stolen or bought. His churches are scarcely worth a visit, his picture-gallery is rich with the works of alien masters. Nature having given him so much natural beauty

seems to have denied him the creative gift. Thus most of his bronzes and statues and frescoes and mosaics she has given him out of her bosom, where they lay hid for hundreds of years. Of these I do not think the Neapolitan proud; he is aware of them as his inalienable right, and thinks more frequently of them than the Londoner does of his perhaps greater treasures in the British Museum. The traveller will decide at once that the Museum and Pompeii are the two most valuable things for him to study. When masterpieces of ancient sculpture are to be seen it is stupid to waste time, precious even to the leisured traveller, over Neapolitan work in the churches and squares.

One must drive to Baiæ, if one would see it, and indeed it is worth seeing. It was during a visit to the so-called Temple of Diana there that I saw some extremely ugly fat old women, pathetically avaricious, dance the Tarantella. Dance, do I say? Nay, waddle, would better express their ridiculous evolutions. In the temple of the chaste and perfect goddess, the sweet and mighty huntress, I, half in tears, watched these fat and filthy peasants pass through the figures of their dance. Indeed, indeed, she had fallen! not before the rude passion of St Paul, nor before the Christian centuries and their new ideal and their splendour, not till now was she utterly cast out, Diana, the huntress of men. Suddenly as I looked on this disgusting spectacle a great hound peered into the cavernous temple from the

broad daylight, and divining—it must have been so—my misery, insinuated his great cold nose into my hand. We alone in all the forgetful world remembered splendid days.

At Cumæ, it is necessary not to miss the charming little amphitheatre dug out of the turf, now green with vines; in its classic and homely usefulness it is immortal. All this country is immortal; passages forgotten since boyhood from Virgil and Lucretius spring to the lips almost at every step. From the road near Monte Nuovo there is a splendid view of the desolate Lake Avernus.

From the left part of this [(the Lucrine Lake) says Evelyn] we walked to the Lake of Avernus, of a round form and totally environed with mountains. This lake was famed by the poet for the gates of hell by which Æneas made his descent, and where they sacrificed to Pluto and the Manes. The waters are of a remarkable black colour, but I tasted of them without danger; hence they fain that the river Styx has its source. . . . Opposite to this, having now lighted our torches, we enter a vast cave, in which, having gone about two hundred paces, we pass a narrow entry which leads us into a room of about ten paces long. . . . Here is a short cell, or rather niche, cut out of the solid rock, somewhat resembling a couch, in which they report that the Sybilla lay and uttered her oracles, but it is supposed by most to have been a bath only.

That was written nearly three hundred years ago, but for all the change to be seen it might have been written yesterday. In truth, whether or no

old Hades still guards his gates, this is even a somewhat melancholy excursion especially to him who has read his Virgil. The nature of the country—volcanic and gloomy, the still and desolate lake, the ruins everywhere around one, the spare population after the crowding and noise of Naples, affect one to melancholy, while if the sky is smiling the road is deep with dust, and if the sky is cloudy the gloominess is but deepened.

On the other side of Naples all is different. Sorrento is if possible more delightful than Castellammare. A summer spent in these places is charming, the heat is not usually oppressive, and the sea is ever at hand to cool and refresh. There is but little more sightseeing to be done, but every turn of the road, every whisper of wind, every shiver of the olive trees, the very silence in the sunshine, is pregnant with a kind of history, a kind of joyful yet sad memory of a departed world.

At Amalfi, in the lovely old Capuchin monastery, now an hotel, one is merely consumed with happiness. It is as though one had suddenly been born into a new world that he had but dimly perceived before in the dreams of his youth. Driving to Amalfi, perhaps from Vietri, one comes by one of "the loveliest pieces of coast scenery in Italy. Its only rivals are the roads from Castellammare to Sorrento, from Genoa to Sestri, and from Nice to Mentone." Civilisations and histories lie deep upon this shore, unfathomably deep for the most part.

It is not easy [says J. A. Symonds] to imagine the time when Amalfi and Atrani were one town with docks and arsenals and harbourage for their associated fleets, and when these little communities were second in importance to no naval power of Christian Europe. The Byzantine Empire lost its hold on Italy during the eighth century, and after this time the history of Calabria is mainly concerned with the republics of Naples and Amalfi, their conflict with the Lombard Dukes of Benevento, their opposition to the Saracens, and their final subjugation by the Norman conquerors of Sicily. Between the year 839 A.D., when Amalfi freed itself from the control of Naples and the yoke of Benevento, and the year 1101, when Roger of Hauteville incorporated the republic in his kingdom of the Two Sicilies, this city was the foremost naval and commercial port of Italy.

It is not easy to realise it, for how are the mighty fallen! To-day Amalfi is but a village on the sea-coast, precipitous, forgotten. She who was the Athens of the middle age, so that "her scholars in the darkest depths of the dark ages owned and prized a famous copy of the Pandects of Justinian, and her gold coinage of *Tari* formed the standard currency before the Florentines had stamped the Lily upon the Tuscan florin; and her seamen deserved the fame of having first used, if they did not actually invent, the compass."

The Hotel Cappuccini at Amalfi, where Signor Vozzi so cheerfully dispenses his hospitality, has since the thirteenth century been in the possession of the Capuchin Friars. Alas! united Italy,

thinking she can dispense with such humble folk, has turned them out of their home of seven centuries, and converted it into an hotel for the traveller. Down its corridors immense congregations of friars, still disputing with us as intruders, seem to pass. In the refectory, where now the unconscious tourist dines cheerfully, they in old times ate in silence, listening to the words of St Francis and St Augustine or Jesus of Nazareth. It is a strange fate that has befallen, yet by no means a peculiar one: many are the monasteries in Italy that have been put to far baser uses, of which let Perugia and Assisi speak, than that of an hotel for the foreigner.

Of Pæstum there is but little to be said. He who has once set eyes upon those majestic temples, splendid in their ruin and their desolation, is bereft of words concerning them to praise them. No grander sight is to be found in this our world. In the immense silence they seem like the very spirits of their gods scorning us and our little day, secure in their nobility. On no account, however great the pains, must the traveller miss this vision of sadness and splendour. In contemplating these desolate ruins Swinburne's words are often in the mind :—

“I have lived long enough, having found one thing—that love hath an end.”

At Salerno there is but little either to do or to see. It is of dull places the dullest, yet it is

not without its own beauty, in spite of guide-books. The cathedral, in defiance of its matchless acrobatics in style, has a kind of loveliness, and, as I have said, and the guide-books before me, it is an excellent centre from which to visit Pæstum and Amalfi.

There remains Pompeii. Imagine to yourself Bournemouth, or even Margate, buried, in all the splendour of our civilisation, under the ashes of a volcano. Forget the immense catastrophe if you will, and think only of the result. Nearly two thousand years hence certain men and governments excavate Margate (or it may be Bournemouth) from her ashes. Well, will they wonder, think you? Will they find priceless bronzes and statues and pictures lovely with vermillion and gold, the luxuries of a great civilisation that reached even to such a place as Margate, not without splendour and beauty? I think not. Yet Pompeii was even less than Margate. No great or rich men lived there; it was not Baiæ nor Cumæ, nor Cæsar's palace on Capri. A mere little provincial town by the sea-side; yet what treasures has she not kept safe for us through all the hurly-burly of the Christian years of war and horror! So far had their civilisation fulfilled its purpose, so much the people loved beauty. Perhaps we have achieved another victory.¹

¹ Mr Neville Rolfe has written a delightful and masterly book on Pompeii which the traveller should possess.

Such, reader, is your prospect around Naples. Go, see, think your own thoughts, and be not led by the nose by the guide, either the German or another; consult him if you will, but I pray you think for yourself. And so back to Naples; and it may well be that I have left the most wonderful sight in that noisy city to the last. I mean the Aquarium. The Aquarium, say you? Yes, the Aquarium. There is nothing like it in the world. Fishes—but fishes! Go, see them under the sea. Devil-fish such as Victor Hugo wrote of; fish that are half vegetable, half fish. Beautiful fishes, ugly fishes, fishes that make you tremble, and fishes that make you smile. There is nothing like the Aquarium on a wet day; one's only regret is that on leaving Naples one has to leave it behind. I pray you on no account to miss the Aquarium from your programme.

X.

AT PERUGIA.

PERUGIA is the queen of all hill cities. She does not belie the richness of her name. Within her palaces is some of the softest and sweetest work of Perugino, within her Cathedral one of the most lovely shrines of the Blessed Virgin. She sits enthroned upon the Apennine, and her prospect is of a thousand hills and valleys. At her feet St Francis lived and sang along the byways, and died while the crested larks sang his requiem. Nor has she been slow to defend her liberty and her beauty. In her history live some of the fiercest spirits of the world; not seldom have her streets been red with blood, not easily have the tyrants conquered her. From Fonte Braccio and the Baglioni to the latest Popes, her lovers have in the end striven to take her life, lest she should slay them. So far as she could see within that noble and magnificent horizon there was none like her, none. Equal in glory with her only rivals—the sun, the moon, and the hills—she stands even to-day, fierce and impregnable in a world

of which she is scornful. A mile away the levelling railway passes unheeded, perhaps a little fearful of her aspect. Nor has she made overtures to progress; it is only painfully and after much labour that one comes to her from the less proud and less isolated cities.

And to-day is she not more terrible—more to be pitied in her pride and her ruin than ever before? Down the long corridors of her monasteries an alien army tramps. Her countenance is haggard and ruinous, her soul shattered under the hoofs of the modern satyr she pretends not to see. She greets the sunrise now perhaps as something less than an equal, she is sometimes ashamed under the soft sky. For in spite of all her pride and glory and spirit and rage, she too in her soul, that, ah! once upon a time, was free, loved her God, and did not disdain to pray to her beautiful and simple Madonnina, nor to tell all Italy with a sweetness and a love beyond any other the story of the life and death of Jesus Christ.

I think, indeed, as to-day she looks over her hills, and some thought comes to her perhaps on the shriek of the engine's whistle of that mighty and material world that never thinks of her for a moment, that disregards her utterly, into whose counsels she is too old and too feeble to enter, that the ruin of her face, that was once so noble, is rather wrought out from within than the work of those who possessed her, not with love, but with lust and fury. Yet in the

night, under a few stars, I have surprised something of the old expression upon her face: thoughts of the old days of pride and liberty and beauty and vision, that have risen to her head with the mist from the valleys—that come to her sleeping, as dreams. It was then for a moment I seemed to remember all her old renown, to be astonished at her splendour, and to understand her tragedy. The implacable night, on whose breast shone a few splendid jewels, had burned up the trumpery crimes of the last century, and there remained the old ineradicable beauty of body and spirit. I watched her through the night, the memories chasing one another across her sleeping bastions, and with the dawn I again beheld her ruin and her despair, the reality of her degradation.

It is to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, whose pictures lend a spirit of antique cheerfulness to the Pinacoteca beyond anything of the sort to be found in the somewhat cloying sweetness of Perugino, that I would suggest the traveller should turn his attention. For Fiorenzo appears, almost beyond his master Gozzoli or Bonfigli, to have caught in his canvasses the Spirit of the fifteenth century, not so much in a new manner, as objectively, seen as though she were a stranger in Florence or even Perugia into whose fierce and rugged streets she trips a vision of new beauty. In that series of eight pictures of scenes in the life of San Bernardino of Siena, a new elegance transforming the old religion, almost certainly aiding it profoundly

in its encounter with the new spirit, seems to have come into the Piazza and the streets of the old warrior city—something infinitely more subtle and perhaps more sincere than the sentiment of Perugino.

There is but little to tell of Fiorenzo himself. Born between 1440 and 1445, he appears to have lived to a great age, and whether he was the pupil of Benozzo Gozzoli or of Bonfigli, whose noble work hangs beside his to-day, or of both, he was as it were the realist of a very fortunate age—altogether delightful at anyrate for us who are only entirely satisfied by a man like Perugino in his forerunners or his pupils.¹¹ Fiorenzo's work is in painting not unlike Crashaw's work in poetry, doubtless a mirror of the time—elegant, charming, and profoundly sincere. His young men, slender and lovely, magnificently dressed, with a dainty fastidiousness and sumptuous elegance, gather together or swagger across his canvasses with all the sweetness, the vanity, the confidence of ideal youth.¹² It is always necessary to remind us that they are but the attendants of a great Saint who is busied with a miracle. What are miracles to them or to us! We care for them for themselves, and are willing to forget San Bernardino. In one picture of this series of events in the life of the saint, in which a hound gazes out of the picture, there are two youths who, even in their obvious surprise and satisfaction at the miracle they are watching, never forget the world and their joy of it for a

moment,—they are but typical of the painter's work. In the same picture is a figure of a kneeling woman, perhaps the wife or mistress of the injured man, in whom we see, perhaps, some reminiscence of the Magdalen before the cross in many an early picture by Fra Angelico or another. The curious rocks towering above their own natural arches show us for a moment a vision of the far later dreams in landscape of Leonardo, in their curious shapes, their stalactites, their mysterious beauty. One is astonished to find so curious an arbour just outside a palace—or a monastery, is it?—that rises magnificent with marble and brick to the left of the picture. Are these paintings really concerned with the miracles of San Bernardino of Siena or with the most magnificent gentlemen Oddi and Baglioni of Perugia? How indifferent are these youths to the work of the good saint! And so this effort of flattery or realism, softened and made precious by the years, comes to us to-day a very vision of ourselves perhaps as we were three hundred years ago. In spite of the beauty of Fiorenzo's Adoration of the Shepherds, where Christ lies among His brethren the Flowers, whilst in the distance shepherds still watch their flocks, angels still sing in heaven, as indeed it befell, it is to these pictures of the fifteenth century in its dainty vanity and proud elegance we return, charmed in a new way by the reality, the sincerity of the artist, and even in his religious pictures he reminds us of such homely, real, natural things as flowers. In

his Adoration one is charmed not so much by the shepherds themselves, so infinitely less real to us than in Murillo's picture in the Vatican, as by the flowers, that exquisite fluffy head of dandelion run to seed, the little wild hyacinths and bluebells—the vision of the unheeding world in the distance. In all Perugia there is nothing more delightful than his pictures of a world that has forgotten for a moment that it is only reprieved from death.

Turning from a world that Fiorenzo seems to have found so proud, so pleasant, and so confident, it is in the Cathedral that the counterpart, the reverse of his vision may be seen. "War and indifference have made San Lorenzo almost human in aspect."

It is here, in the warmth and security that always in some way seem absent from the city itself, enshrined in the Cappella del Santo Anello, that Perugia has placed her most precious possession, the wedding ring of the Blessed Virgin. France still holds Perugia's picture of the Sposalizio, which Napoleon stole—it is but a copy we see in its place; a kind of divine reprisal, one may believe, for Messer Winterio di Magonza "piously stole" the wedding ring of the Blessed Virgin from Chiusi towards the end of the fifteenth century. One is privileged to behold so magnificent a relic in the blessed month of May from daylight to nightfall. The shrine, where in its glorious casket of silver the holy ring reposes, is lighted by innumerable candles, and suddenly, in the dazzling soft light one

sees a shimmer of little conflicting colours aglow, a burning point of fire. The ring is of some strange cornelian or agate, and semi-transparent and pale as a flame. Some have described it as white, some as blue, some as yellow, some as red. Goldoni in his Memoirs says it depends upon the heart of him who approaches it what colour it takes.

There is also the famous picture of Madonna delle Grazie to cheer the traveller. No sweeter vision of Our Lady will he ever see, till in heaven he shall perhaps behold her as she is. With hands raised she seems to deprecate our prayers and to bless us. Innumerable trifles, silver hearts, and invisible thankfulness surround the altar of a "miraculous" picture, in which even the stern Protestant cannot but find at least a miracle of beauty. Perugino, it is said, sought his inspiration here, and a hundred galleries witness that he was heard indeed. It was to her one day as I knelt that I heard an old priest, to whom, after all, the service of the sanctuary, seeing that he was very old, must perhaps have lost some of its enchantment, whisper, "Ecce ancilla Domini."

It is delightful to spend many weeks of summer in Perugia. Miss Margaret Symonds and Miss Janet Duff have made for the leisured traveller, at least, a delightful companion in 'The Story of Perugia,' published by Messrs Dent in their "Medieval Towns Series." Mr J. A. Symonds in his 'Sketches in Italy,' gives us a wonderful picture of Perugia in the grip of the Baglioni. It is with such writers one

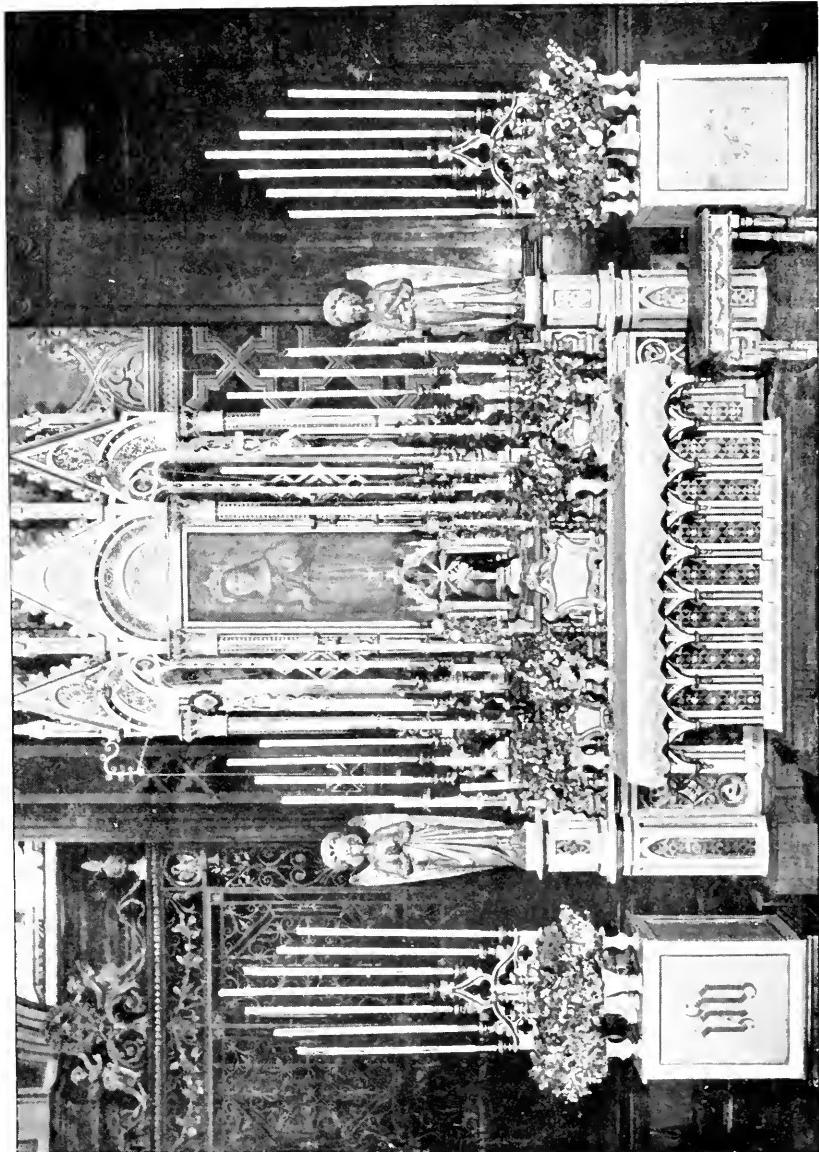


Photo by
Alinari Brothers.

THE ALTAR OF SANTA MARIA DELLE GRAZIE
IN SAN LORENZO, PERUGIA.



desires to pass unending days in the old streets and churches, and on the everlasting hills. Regardless of modernity, since to the seeing eye there is but the thin haze of scarce two hundred thousand sunsets between our poor day and theirs.

XI.

AT ASSISI.

IN thinking of St Francis, and it is the inevitable joy of the traveller to be able at Assisi to think of nothing else, one is compelled as with no other saint to think of him as a human being, almost perfect in many ways, of which cheerfulness is not the least, but always very human beside the figures of other it may be less perfect but more terrible saints. M. Paul Sabatier, a French Protestant, has devoted himself during many years to the study of the life of the little poor man of Assisi, gradually making clear for us those things which were hidden and obscure, throwing a new light on a life of peculiar perfection, so that he seems to suggest that under all the beauty and sweetness that have led men to think of him as the imitation of Christ, wholly compelled and transformed by it, there lies the revolutionary, the progressive reformer, intent on his own freedom of spirit and the liberty of the hearts of men. And however we may view so new a reading of the parable of St Francis's life, we are

from the first grateful for the exquisite and loving care that M. Sabatier, profound and learned, yet never without a transforming and illuminating love, has bestowed upon this saint of an alien religion.

But for the traveller, who without undue haste would see Assisi and learn something of a life that men have counted so precious, there is no book so perfect as ‘The Little Flowers,’ the ‘Fioretti,’ of St Francis himself.

Born at Assisi in 1182, the son of wealthy parents, St Francis was named Giovanni at the font, and it was only on his father’s return from a journey, possibly to Lyons to sell cloth or silk, that he was renamed by him “Il Francesco,” the little Frenchman. Educated by his father, not only as became a merchant but to some extent as became a fine gentleman, Francis appears first to have turned his thoughts towards heaven from a world that he ever found gay, after a long illness. It is from this time that we find him with “no relish but for solitude and prayer.” And it was one day in St Damian’s Church, without the walls of Assisi, that kneeling before a crucifix he hears a voice, that voice which creeps into the lives of all the saints as that mighty and marvellous river winds through the pictures of Lionardo, saying thrice over, “Francis, go and repair my house which thou seest falling”; for even then the church was very old and frail, haunted by innumerable unavailing prayers and unworthy petitions. And coming home he, without thought of evil, over-

whelmed by that implacable voice, “took a horse-load of cloth out of his father’s warehouse and sold it, together with the horse,” at Foligno, a town some twelve miles from Assisi. So he came back to St Damian’s Church with the money, which he offered to the priest who, however, refused it, laying it on the window-sill; but the priest, though old and poor, seems to have seen something divine in the young man after all, for he permitted him to stay with him and loved him. But Peter Bernardon, the father of Francis, came to St Damian’s Church angry because of the loss of his cloth and of his horse, but finding the money laid on the widow-sill he grew calmer, though he did not forbear to denounce his son as a madman, in which the townspeople appear to have agreed with him. And eventually Francis having been seen in the streets in rags, Peter Bernardon took him home and locked him up, but his mother set him free when his father was gone. Thus the story of St Francis begins with a not unusual touch of everyday humour, none the less charming on that account, since the saints, as a rule, early put humour away from them, with life.

St Francis, freed by the love of his mother, went to St Damian’s, where, after a time, his father followed him and demanded that either he should return home or forego his inheritance. Before the Bishop, who, as well may be, was astonished no less at the severity of the father than at the eagerness of the son for poverty, and appears therefore

to have hesitated, St Francis, impatient of delay, “stripped himself of his clothes and gave them to his father, saying cheerfully and meekly, ‘Hitherto I have called you father on earth, but now I say with more confidence Paternoster qui es in cœlis, in whom I place all my hope and treasure.’” The good Bishop, somewhat overcome by the remarkable actions and fervour of the youth, and for the sake of Lady Modesty, gave Francis his cloak for the moment, and later procured that of his servant for him, which Francis signed in chalk with the Holy Cross and cheerfully accepted as his first alms. Thus St Francis renounced the world and set out for heaven, being about twenty-five years old.

St Francis now began to beg money to repair St Damian’s, and having collected a little, he with his own hands helped to carry the stones, and so repaired the church. He then went to La Porziuncula, a little chapel belonging to the Benedictines of Subiaco, at that time nearly a mile from Assisi, but now to be found within Santa Maria degli Angeli, that has been built around it. When St Francis came to it on that morning in 1207 he found it in an utterly ruinous condition, almost unfit either for service or dwelling. He immediately set himself to repair it, which he did before the year was out. To-day over the magnificent church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, built by Vignola, and begun in 1569, to be restored after an earthquake by Poletti in 1832, is the vision of St Francis when he heard that voice speak for the second

time, “Take nothing for your journey, neither staves nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.” And it was this one coat, girt with a rough cord, that in the next year, 1208, he gave to his disciples as their habit, when first Bernard, a rich tradesman of Assisi, and then Peter, a canon of the Cathedral of Assisi, and then Brother Giles, “a person of great simplicity and virtue,” joined him as his brethren in his cell at Porziuncula. So he went to Rome in 1209, and “obtained a verbal approbation of his Order” from Innocent III. It seems to have been a vision the Pope had of St Francis propping up the Lateran Church, which was about to fall, that convinced him of the necessity of approving this new little Order of perfection. It is, however, curious that the same story is told of St Dominic, of whom the Pope had a similar vision scarcely five years later, that convinced him of the necessity for that approbation also. St Francis had now twelve disciples. His Rule was one of great simplicity: it included obedience, chastity, and poverty, and the greatest of these was, I think, Lady Poverty. Not only individually must the Franciscans hold no possessions, but in common also it was unlawful for them to possess anything whatever. St Dominic, in an encounter with St Francis, lays especial stress on this point. For having desired to take thought for the morrow, which St Francis forbade, and having at last seen, as it were, by a miracle that St Francis was right, “coming before him, he knelt down and humbly

told his fault, and added: ‘Of a truth God hath especial care of these holy poor little ones, and I knew it not; and from now henceforth I promise to observe the Holy Gospel poverty, and in the name of God I curse all the brothers of my Order who in the said Order shall presume to hold property.’”

To understand the spirit of this man,—so like to Christ as to have seemed almost a re-incarnation of Him, so that legend tells us he was born in a stable, as was our Lord, and other things too they had in common,—is to possess oneself of one of the most beautiful things in the world. His body, we are told, he called brother Ass, because it must bear great burdens and be beaten, and rest but of necessity. Everything, and every sort of animal in the world were to him brethren or sisters. Thus the sun, the moon, and the stars, the fishes, the birds, and the flowers, are, as it were, only perhaps more attentive members than ourselves of the family of God. A profound humanist in the best sense of that term, he in that rough and rude age had in more than one way, as it were, anticipated the Renaissance. “Know, dear brother,” says he to his companion, “that courtesy is one of the qualities of God Himself, who of His courtesy giveth His sun and His rain to the just and the unjust: and courtesy is the sister of charity, the which quencheth hate and keepeth love alive.”

In March 1212 St Francis met Clare, the daughter of Phavorino Sciffo, a knight of noble family, she having run from home to Porziuncula, where St

Francis dwelt with his brothers. He met her at the door of the church of St Mary, and together with his brethren began to sing “Veni Creator.” Before the high altar St Francis gave her the penitential habit, and there being as yet no Franciscan nunnery, he sent her to the “Benedictine nunnery of St Paul. The Poor Clares date from this epoch the foundation of their Order.” In 1215 St Francis and St Dominic met in Rome and loved one another. In 1219 was held at La Porziuncula the great chapter “called of Matts,” because being very numerous it was impossible to find a building in which it might assemble, so tents and booths were set up in the fields. So great had the order grown that it is said more than 5000 friars came to this general chapter.

St Clare, who is in many ways the most important figure in the order next to St Francis, was the sister of St Damian. One invariably pictures her, poor little saint as she is, on her knees at the feet of St Francis. Many lovely idylls are woven between them in the pages of the ‘Fioretti,’ as “How St Clare, being sick, was miraculously carried on the night of Christmas Eve to the church of St Francis and there heard the Office,” and “How St Clare ate with St Francis and the brothers his companions in St Mary of the Angels,” which runs as follows, as translated by Mr T. W. Taylor :—

Whereas St Francis was at Assisi oftentimes, he visited St Clare and gave her holy admonishments. And she having

exceeding great desire once to break bread with him, often-times besought him thereto, but he was never willing to grant her this consolation ; wherefore his companions, beholding the desire of St Clare, said unto St Francis : “ Father, it doth appear to us that this severity accordeth not with heavenly charity : since thou givest not ear unto Sister Clare, a virgin so saintly, so beloved of God, in so slight a matter as breaking bread with thee, and, above all, bearing in mind that she, through thy preaching, abandoned the riches and pomps of the world. And of a truth had she asked of thee a greater boon than this, thou oughtest so to do unto thy spiritual plant.” . . . Then spoke St Francis : “ Since it seems good to you, it seems so, likewise, unto me. But that she may be the more consoled, I will that this breaking of bread take place in St Mary of the Angels ; for she has been so long shut up in St Damian that it will rejoice her to see again the house of St Mary’s, where her hair was shorn away and she became the bride of Jesus Christ ; there let us eat together in the name of God.” When came the day ordained by him, St Clare with one companion passed forth from out the convent, and with the companions of St Francis to bear her company, came unto St Mary of the Angels and devoutly saluted the Virgin Mary before her altar, where she had been shorn and veiled ; so they conducted her to see the House until such time as the hour for breaking bread was come. And in the meantime St Francis let make ready the table on the bare ground as he was wont to do. And the hour of breaking bread being come, they set themselves down together, St Francis and St Clare, and one of the companions of St Francis with the companion of St Clare, and all the other companions took each his place at the table with all humility. And at the first dish St Francis began to speak of God so sweetly, so sublimely, and so wondrously

that the fulness of the divine grace came down on them, and they were all rapt in God. And as they were thus rapt, with eyes and hands uplifted to heaven, the folk of Assisi and Bettona and the country round saw that St Mary of the Angels and all the House and the wood that was just hard by the House was burning brightly, and it seemed as it were a great fire that filled the Church and the House and the whole wood together: for the which cause the folk of Assisi ran thither in great haste for to quench the flames, believing of a truth that the whole place was all on fire. But coming close up to the House and finding no fire at all, they entered within and found St Francis and St Clare.

“Never was wedding banquet,” says Gabriele d’Annunzio of this passage—“Never was wedding banquet lit up by more radiant torches of love.” So St Clare loved St Francis, so St Francis loved St Clare.

It was about the time of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in September 1224 that St Francis made his retreat on Monte Alvernia, and there received the stigmata from our Lord Jesus, as may be learned from many a pleasant fresco up and down Italy.

St Francis, says the anonymous author of the ‘Fioretti,’ being forty-three years old in 1224, being inspired of God, set out from the valley of Spoleto, where Christ spoke of love to Sant’ Angela of Foligno, for to go into Romagna. But Orlando da Chiusi of Carentino, having heard of the little poor man of Assisi, loved him, and gave him at this time Monte Alvernia, not far from Chiusi. And so it was that St Francis came to make his retreat there before the

Feast of the Exaltation. He being alone, was wont to say matins with Brother Leo, who, in order to see whether or no St Francis wished his company in prayer, used to cry out, "*Domine, labia mea aperies!*"—"O Lord, open Thou my lips," when he drew near that place where St Francis was. But on this morning St Francis made him no answer, and contrary to St Francis's desire, but with the very best of intentions, dear little brother Leo crossed the bridge over the chasm, which you may see to this day, and entered into St Francis's cell. There he found Francis in ecstasy, saying, "Who art Thou, O most sweet, my God? What am I, most vile worm, and Thine unprofitable servant?" Again and again Brother Leo heard him repeat these words, and wondering thereat, he lifted his eyes to the sky, and saw there among the stars, for it was dark, a torch of flame very beautiful and bright, which, coming down from the sky, rested on St Francis's head. So thinking himself unworthy to behold so sweet a vision, "he softly turned away for to go to his cell again. And as he was going softly, deeming himself unseen, St Francis was aware of him by the rustling of the leaves under his feet." Surely, even to the most doubtful, that sound of the rustling leaves must bring conviction. And St Francis explains to Brother Leo all that this might mean.

And as he thus continued a long time in prayer, he came to know that God would hear him, and that so far as was possible for the mere creature, so far would it be granted

him to feel the things aforesaid. . . . And as he was thus set on fire in his contemplation on that same morn, he saw descend from heaven a Seraph with six wings resplendent and aflame, and as with swift flight the Seraph drew nigh unto St Francis so that he could discern him, he clearly saw that he bore in him the image of a man crucified ; and his wings were in such guise displayed that two wings were spread above his head, and two were spread out to fly, and other two covered all his body. Seeing this St Francis was sore adread, and was filled at once with joy and grief and marvel. He felt glad at the gracious look of Christ, who appeared to him so lovingly, and gazed on him so graciously ; but on the other hand, seeing Him crucified upon the cross, he felt immeasurable grief for pity's sake. . . . Then the whole mount of Alvernia appeared as though it burned with bright shining flames that lit up all the mountains and valleys round as though it had been the sun upon the earth ; whereby the shepherds that were keeping watch in these parts, seeing the mountains aflame, and so great a light around, had exceeding great fear, according as they afterwards told unto the brothers, declaring that this flame rested upon the mount of Alvernia for the space of an hour and more. In like manner at the bright shining of this light, which through the windows lit up the hostels of the country round, certain muleteers that were going into Romagna arose, believing that the day had dawned, and saddled and laded their beasts ; and going on their way, they saw the said light die out and the material sun arise. In the seraphic vision Christ, the which appeared to him, spake to St Francis certain high and secret things, the which St Francis in his lifetime desired not to reveal to any man ; but after his life was done he did reveal them as is set forth below ; and the words were these : " Knowest thou," said

Christ, “what it is that I have done unto thee? I have given thee the Stigmata that are the signs of My Passion, to the end that thou mayest be My standard-bearer. And even as in the day of My death I descended into hell and brought out thence all souls that I found there by reason of these My Stigmata: even so do I grant to thee that every year on the day of thy death thou shalt go to Purgatory, and in virtue of thy Stigmata shalt bring out thence all the souls of thy three orders,—to wit, Minors, Sisters, Continents,—and likewise others that shall have had a great devotion for thee, and shalt lead them unto the glory of Paradise, to the end that thou mayest be confirmed to Me in death as thou art in life.” Then this marvellous image vanished away, and left in the heart of St Francis a burning ardour and flame of love divine, and in his flesh a marvellous image and copy of the Passion of Christ. For straightway in the hands and feet of St Francis began to appear the marks of the nails in such wise as he had seen them in the body of Jesus Christ the crucified, the which had shown Himself to him in the likeness of a Seraph; and thus his hands and feet appeared to be pierced through the middle with nails, and the heads of them were in the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet outside the flesh, and their points came out in the back of his hands and of his feet, so that they seemed bent back and rivetted in such a fashion that under the bend and rivetting which all stood out above the flesh might easily be put a finger of the hand as a ring; and the heads of the nails were round and black. Likewise in the right side appeared the image of a wound made by a lance unhealed, and red and bleeding, the which afterwards oftentimes dropped blood from the sacred breast of St Francis, and stained with blood his tunic and his hose.

Thus St Francis received the Stigmata. Nor is there any reason to doubt the writer of the ‘Fioretti.’ That he actually received the Stigmata is as certain as any other fact of history, and far better attested than most.

No long time after St Francis came to die—lame from the sacred wounds and ill and weary at last. No longer as in youth could he sing those French songs in the byways and olive-gardens around Assisi. We catch a glimpse of him in the convent garden of St Clare, under the shade of the olive-trees in a summer of drought, when St Clare drank the tears “from his almost blind eyes” to quench her thirst, not only for water but for St Francis, too. It is almost the last we ever see of the mystical lovers. Of his love of all natural things the world has gladly taken account, for it is there that he is so different from almost all other saints. He died one day of October 1226, and it was Saturday; in La Porziuncula he lay listening to the song of the birds he loved, when Christ caught him away from our earth, which has ever been the poorer since we spared him.

If the traveller, who by some fortunate chance is not in a hurry, will spend a few days at Assisi in the company of the ‘Fioretti,’ he will certainly not have journeyed through Italy in van. No sweeter book was ever composed, or a truer either, for those who have ears to hear.

XII.

FLORENCE.—I.

IT is well for the traveller to remember that unless he has a considerable time at his disposal he cannot see everything in Florence. He will do well, therefore, on coming to a city that is really full of things to see, to map out his days carefully, determining to see only a little every day, but to see that little carefully at his leisure. To rush from the Duomo to Santa Croce, and thence to the Annunziata, and thence to San Lorenzo, and thence to Santa Maria Novella, is merely to succeed in confusing his mind so that he will never be able to separate the interior of one from another, or indeed the exterior either. All the guide-books I ever read ask the traveller to see too much, and in their usual seven days never leave him a minute to himself. Yet it is just the time he has to himself that is most precious. For it is then that he will gather his really enduring impressions, which, indelible though they be, are delicate beings that come by chance and are never found by seeking. It would be well, if, having

ten days at his disposal,—and who would willingly spend less in Florence?—he devotes the afternoons to casual walks or drives, to dreams and what not, and the morning only to sight-seeing. All wet days (of which I wish him few) may very well be spent in the galleries, together with two afternoons towards the end of the visit. I give below a small time-table, allowing two mornings, should there be no wet ones, for the galleries.

First Morning, Duomo group and Museo di Santa Maria del Fiore.

Second " Santa Maria Novella.

Third " San Marco and Riccardi Palace.

Fourth " Santa Croce.

Fifth " The Bargello, Annunziata,

Sixth " Or San Michele, San Lorenzo Sacristy.

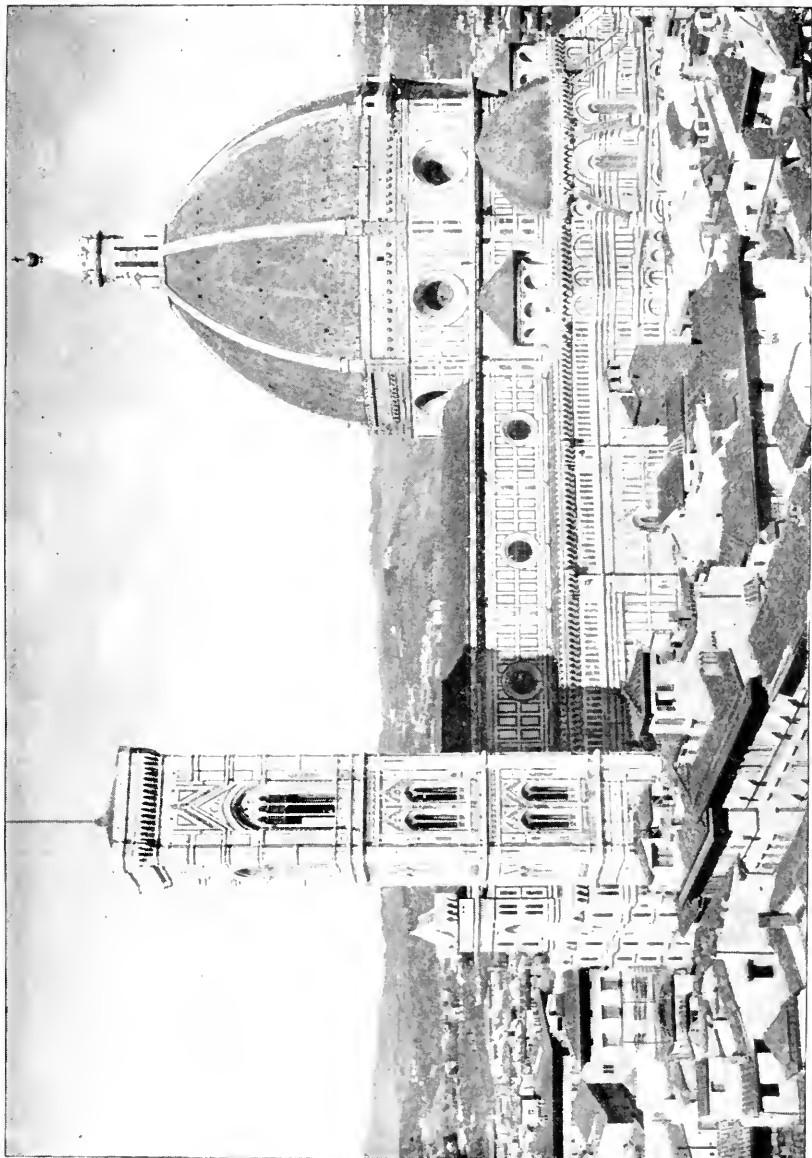
Seventh " Galleries.

Eighth " Galleries.

Ninth " The Carmine.

Tenth " Piazza della Signoria, Palazzo Vecchio.

Thus in ten days, of which the afternoons are more or less free, Florence may be superficially known. Two afternoons should be devoted to the galleries as well as the two mornings, and an afternoon each given to Fiesole, San Miniato, and The Certosa. Even under this rule the traveller, unless he is fairly well acquainted with his subjects, will suffer inevitably from mental indigestion, the most appalling and common ailment to be met with among travellers in Italy.



SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE
AND GIOOTTO'S TOWER, FLORENCE.

Photo by Linati Brothers.

If the unfortunate being who wanders through the churches, his eyes glued to his flaming travellers' bible, thinking that it will save him, were to spend some of the time he must give to railway travelling in reading simple and easy lives of St Benedict, St Dominic, St Francis, St Catherine, and St Anthony, he would not be so bewildered before these seas of frescoed saints; and then, instead of reading his guide-book, he would read the frescoes themselves, as they were meant to be read, simply like a book. If, as is very often the case, the traveller never heard of St Dominic before he saw his name in Baedeker, how can he hope to be interested in his life or his miracles, or anything that is his, written in flashes of genius on the walls of an old church? And if all he knows of St Francis is that he was poor, though that is much, still it will scarcely explain satisfactorily the story of the Stigmata. Unfortunately for the Englishman it is seldom a story from the Bible that the painter sets himself to tell, but generally the life of a saint perfectly well known to his countrymen, about whom the average Englishman knows nothing at all. Even the life of Our Lady is utterly unknown to the ordinary Englishman. Now one is obviously lost here in Florence where there are miles of pictures, and miles of frescoes dealing for the most part with the lives of saints, if one is utterly ignorant of the very names of those of whom they speak. But with some knowledge of these lovely and superb souls, nothing can be more enjoyable than to spend

some time in their company. And indeed in Florence one is in the home of Literature and the Arts ; Commerce does not force itself on one's notice as at Genoa, but one's thoughts turn to Dante and Giotto who were friends, to Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo, and Ghiberti who forged the Paradise Gate of the Baptistry. Everywhere one is surrounded by beauty, save in the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, a hideous stucco square with a ridiculous monument in the midst, that occupies the place of the old and beautiful market-place of the city. Vandalism appears to have suffered a renaissance under the House of Savoy as Learning did under the house of Medici ; and it is here in Florence, I think, that one learns to be ashamed for modern liberty and democracy with its licence and make-believe.

Richer than any other city in Europe in pictures, it is impossible to notice the three great galleries at any length here. The Pitti Palace, designed by Brunelleschi, and for the present the king's residence in Florence, is a gallery of masterpieces collected by the Medici, in which almost every picture is worthy of long study and attention. Among the portraits I would name the one by Titian of that Duke of Norfolk exiled by Richard II., who eventually died in a monastery in Venice. The extraordinarily beautiful English face, fulfilled with some incalculable romance, is, to me at least, by far the most delightful portrait in Florence. One seems to understand England, her charm, her fascination, her extraordinary

persistence, on looking at this picture of one of her sons, as never before: all the tragedy of her kings, the adventure to be met with in her seas, the beauty and culture of Oxford, and the serenity of her country places come back to one fresh and unsullied by the memories of the defiling and trumpery cities that so lately have begun to destroy her. Raphael's pictures are more numerous here than in any other gallery, and the almost fabulous Giorgione is represented by the magnificent picture called *The Concert*, of which Pater has written so exquisitely. “*The Concert in the Pitti Palace*,” he writes, “in which a monk with cowl and tonsure touches the keys of a harpsichord, while a clerk placed behind him grasps the handle of a viol, and a third with cap and plume seems to wait upon the true interval for beginning to sing, is undoubtedly Giorgione’s.¹ The outline of the lifted finger, the trace of the plume, the very threads of the fine linen, which fasten themselves in the memory in the moment before they are lost altogether in that calm unearthly glow, the skill which has caught the waves of wandering sound and fixed them for ever on the lips and hands—these are indeed the master’s own; . . . and among the most precious things in the world of art.”

Bartolommeo and Andrea del Sarto are also magnificently represented, especially the latter, who was

¹ Kugler throws doubt on its authenticity, however, supposing it to be an early work by Titian. Cf. Kugler, ‘Italian Schools of Painting,’ vol. ii. 55.

the first among the few “colourists” Florence produced. For in all Florentine art it is design, drawing, idea, rather than colour, as with the Venetian, that we find ;—especially valuable qualities, with which art renewed herself.

The Uffizi Gallery, with its collections of sculpture, painting, drawings, and jewels, is perhaps less a scrupulous collection, but not less valuable to the student. Botticelli, of whom Mr Pater was the first to write in England, is magnificently represented by the Adoration of the Kings (1286), The Birth of Venus, Calumny, and Judith with the Head of Holofernes, together with several Holy Families; Titian, Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Giorgione, Correggio, Leonardo da Vinci, are represented by splendid pictures, but they can all be studied better elsewhere. Fra Filippo Lippi and Filippino Lippi, the master and pupil of Botticelli, are, however, seen here and at the Accademia in their full glory. Fra Angelico, whose Tabernacle and Predella in the Hall of Lorenzo Monaco are among the chief treasures of the collection, is almost as glorious here as at San Marco, though not so ubiquitous. One is overwhelmed by the glories of the lives of men, the beauty of the gods, the splendour of earth no less than of heaven. The art of the fifteenth century comes to one as a strong and mighty angel, not without sins. And in a world given over to all the luxury of a great city, the home of princes and of the revolution of the mind of man, amidst all the sensuality of that awakened



Photo by Ilinari Brothers.

THE BIRTH OF VENUS.

By Sandro Botticelli, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

mind, the animalism of the Latin race that has never been sufficiently powerful to kill the spirituality that is alive in the race even to-day, one finds that Florence created an ideal idea, that went hand in hand with her religion, only to transform it utterly, and in time to supersede it. Yet she still kept about her her ancient mantle, figured with supernatural life, full of astounding adventures, lighted by the genius of saint and martyr, artist and hero. At first, as with the earliest men, and with Fra Angelico, art was in her hands a kind of symbol; so that one might almost say that here was an alphabet, certain signs, colours, or natural objects that had come to have a limited or certain meaning. And then life thrusts itself on man's notice, and the gods and heaven itself are forgotten for the beauty of earth and the strength of man. Thus Luca Signorelli introduces into his picture of the Adoration of the Shepherds naked youths, that he may express his love for the human form, its glory, its perfection; and so at last the religious painters are out-moded, and the realists, those who had fallen in love with life, are victorious, and the great names of the sixteenth century are carved on the minds of men never to be erased. It is, I think, in some such mood, and with some such idea as this, that one leaves the Uffizi for the first time, perhaps a little bewildered by the number of the pictures and the pieces of sculpture. And of these latter it may be said that he who has not seen the Venus dei Medici is indeed unfortunate.

She is the younger sister, perhaps, of that Aphrodite returning from the bath that Praxiteles made. For though so good a judge as Shelley considered the goddess in the Tribune as “the finest personification of Venus . . . in all antique statuary,” to me, at least, she is less beautiful than Venus of Melos, and less profoundly the “goddess of desire” than Venus of the Capitol. She is innocent, while the Roman is learned in the secrets of love, and is, while less perfect perhaps in form, more desirable by far. Found in Hadrian’s villa, below Tivoli, Cosimo III., of the House of Medici, brought her to Florence in 1677, where she was considered to be “a work among other works as the very goddess among other goddesses,” easily the first. But that she is inferior in no small degree to the Aphrodite of Cnidos, of which Ovid wrote, is, since the discovery of that statue, impossible of denial; but Shelley died too soon to see the Cnidian Venus.

In the Hall of Niobe are the famous antique copies of the group of Niobe with her sons and daughters. Niobe herself is, as Shelley beautifully says, “the consummation of feminine majesty and loveliness, beyond which the imagination scarcely doubts that it can conceive nothing.” The child at her knees, “terrified as we may conceive by the destruction of all its kindred, has fled to its mother, and is hiding its head in the folds of her robe, and casting back one arm as in a passionate appeal for defence, where it never before could have been sought

in vain. Everything is swallowed up in sorrow: she is all tears: her gaze, in assured expectation of the arrow piercing its last victim in her embrace, is fixed on her omnipotent enemy. The pathetic beauty of the expression of her tender and inexhaustible and unquenchable despair is beyond the effect of sculpture. As soon as the arrow shall pierce her last tie upon earth, the fable that she was turned into stone or dissolved in a fountain of tears will be but a feeble emblem of the sadness of hopelessness in which the few and evil years of her remaining life we feel must flow away. It is difficult to speak of the beauty of the countenance, or to make intelligible in words from what such astonishing loveliness results." Indeed I know but one head in all antiquity in which the expression is so lovely, and that is a statue of Demeter of Cnidos in the British Museum, where the expression, the soul speaking in the face, seems almost for the first time to have found expression, whence it has utterly overcome all art, and is the very touchstone of genius.

But the Uffizi, crowded as it is with the treasures of many ages, will after all impress the traveller chiefly as a picture-gallery, which, so far as the Italian school is concerned, is among the first in the world. It is impossible within the covers of a book devoted to Italy and the Italians to do more than touch upon the enormous wealth of ancient art in the possession of almost every city. And here in Florence more than anywhere else I know

my feebleness. Where libraries have scarcely sufficed to treat adequately so great a subject it is almost ridiculous for a book of a few hundred pages to be anything but silent. Yet I have ventured to set down in some detail the lives of two of the lesser artists of Florence in the days of her glory and youth. If within these two meagre chapters I have managed to convey to the reader some suggestion of the times and the lives of these men, I am content. In order to care for any work of art really deeply it is, I am assured, necessary to know and to understand the life and ideas of the artist, to sympathise with him as it were, so that the emotion of the onlooker may generously expand the perhaps imperfect or tentative achievement of the artist to the full measure of his intention. Therefore, instead of a long and, as I think, useless sermon upon, or description of, the picture or other work of art, I have placed these two short lives of Fra Lippo Lippi and Luca della Robbia before the reader, not without fear that he may imagine I think them adequate; because it is in some such way as I have ventured there to suggest that I believe the way to true appreciation lies.

The Accademia delle Belle Arti is perhaps to the student the most interesting picture-gallery in Florence. The late Mr Grant Allen, whose method as set forth for the traveller in those inimitable guide-books of his I fear I have never dared to follow, says that it is "by far the most important

gallery in Florence for the study of Florentine art." For though it contains less masterpieces than the Pitti, and has not the variety of the Uffizi, it is here one finds the earlier masters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries without whom the art of Raphael and Lionardo, Michael Angelo and the Venetians, is not to be understood. It also has the advantage of a complete collection of casts of the sculpture of Michael Angelo, and the master's David as he carved it, removed here from the Piazza Signoria. One of Botticelli's most famous pictures, the Primavera, is also here in the Sala Prima del Botticelli, together with some of the loveliest work of his master Fra Lippo Lippi. Gentile da Fabriano's Adoration of the Magi, removed from the Sacristy of Santa Trinità, and Fra Angelico's Descent from the Cross, also from Santa Trinità, are the master-pieces of the two artists, at least apart from fresco so far as the Fra Angelico is concerned. In the Adoration of the Magi the curiously delightful attempt to paint a sunrise is to be noticed, and in the latter the still visible marks of flagellation on the Body of the Christ.

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But there is a Florence apart from her churches and her galleries which the traveller must by no means miss. It is fairly easy, given sufficient time and a good catalogue and guide-book, such as E. Grifi's, to know something of that Florence which is preserved in museums and churches; but without in

any way wishing to suggest that such a Florence is less priceless than it really is, I think that there is another city too which it is less easy to know and care for, perhaps because it is more common but less obvious—I mean even Florence herself as she is to-day. Pierre Loti, than whom no more sensitive artist ever gazed over a city at night-fall, has said somewhere that to see things by stealth in the evening for the first time in a glance, as it were, without being able to take a second look, is the way to receive a really true impression of them. Well, it may well be that one coming to Florence in the evening, when all the galleries would be shut, who would have nothing to do but wander up and down her streets, and, it may be, into a church or two, would gather a more perfect image of this flower-like city than that traveller who, with his nose in his guide-book, dashes from gallery to church, and from church to museum, in a cab all the day long. To see the Venus of the Medici and to miss hearing the singers that come with the moonlight, or the fall of the waters of Arno towards the Cascine, would be but a sorry way of seeing Florence. Nor is it to the Florence of Ruskin, nor to the Florence of the Gambrinus Halle and the like, that I would lead the traveller, but to Florence herself, which is really independent alike of traveller and modern citizen, populated as she is by the great figures of the past and the dreams of our very selves for years before we had the fortune to set eyes upon her.

XIII.

FLORENCE.—II.

THERE has been so much written on the history, the arts, the churches, and the great men of Florence that, at least for the educated traveller, it is to no strange city he comes when he enters her gates, but to a place almost as well known as Rome, and certainly as beloved. Yet, after all, when one has seen all the galleries, and all the churches, and all the statues, there still remains, better than them all, Florence herself, of whom they are but the splendid ornaments. What I am going to write is only for those who are not in the power of the first passion of discovery, who, having seen all her ornaments and loved them, are after all really in love with *La Bella* herself, and are content. It is curious how the English love Florence better than any other Italian city. Is there something of home in her quiet, perverse streets; something of an English cathedral town in the nobility of her gesture and her expression? No; I think there is very little of England in a city so passionate; she conquers, I will believe, by sheer beauty. Before

any city in the world she seems to smile ; one is in love with her from the first morning, she is so frank and joyful and grave. She has built also within her walls two towers, the one to Liberty and the other to Humility, and that is the fairest of all towers in the world.

“ Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.”

As I look down over the near valleys to the evening mist in the distance touched with gold, where Arno winds like a silver thread over the plain towards the city, these words always come into my mind. Seen from some village without the city, it is as though for the first time one had experienced quiet, and realised just for a moment the beauty of holiness. In these tiny villages in the dawn the country-folk, with now and then a stranger from the city, come into the church for Mass, and the children bring flowers—irises or tall nodding Florentine lilies—which the Capuchins help them to lay at the altar of Our Lady. At night, as one gazes on Florence from afar, she seems to be made of some great precious stone ; the roofs and towers that the moon strikes seem so far away ; the great and holy dome of the Duomo like the name of Mary unuttered on the lips ; and then one seems to hear the call at dawn on the mountains, far, oh ! far away, and the rush of a distant waterfall as one drowses off to sleep. I once saw a star shoot across heaven over the city leaving a train of gold,—I still treasure the vision ; and from my village in the hills I

used to sit and watch the night grow up like a great lily out of the valleys. Then on a night in June I have heard just a little laugh come in at my window in the twilight, while the chestnut-trees were shedding their blossoms white and red : it must have been such a little laugh that Lippo Lippi heard from the great house at the corner—

“There came a hurry of feet, and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whiffs of song—
Flower o' the broom;
Take away love and our earth is a tomb.”

Ah ! you too have heard those mandolines mixing with the noise of the streams, singing wonderful songs ; you too, perhaps, have under that profound starry sky wondered at the hearts of men.

Or in the deep heart of the night I have seen some old woman lying before a little shrine of Madonna at the corner of some street, prostrate under some unimaginable sorrow, some unappeasable regret, some terrible awakening. Does she hear—that Virgin with the narrow half-open eyes and the side-long look ? God, I know not if she hears or no. Perhaps she does not hear—she is occupied with grand and joyful things ; how should she hear or care or know ? Perhaps I alone have heard in all the world. Heaven is too calm, too spotless, too beautiful to dare to sympathise with so desolate a sorrow. No, it is impossible that they who have heard the Voice as of many waters should care to listen to a poor old woman sobbing and in tears.

To you, travellers, whose eyes are satiated with Saints and Virgins, who have found them ever occupied with their own perfections, does it seem wonderful that one should cry to them in vain? But Madonna of the Street Corner is perhaps less exclusive than those majestical, who have attained to the honour of a place in the Uffizi or the Pitti Palace and look their best for you. Yet I will even call them, in spite of protest, unfortunate. Their ears, long since filled it may well be with heavenly music, hear no prayers from those who are still wretched and alone. Vulgar and incredulous eyes gaze on their beauty and their pain; their ecstasy or death is watched for ever by stupid unseeing eyes that have no love for them, and it may be, those who gaze never heard their names before. Madonna of the Street Corner, in all her little pomp of blue and white, and few and vulgar silver hearts, she at least is loved of some who pass by, not without a reverent smile. She mothers those whom the streets house. Poor Queen of Angels, with her tiny flickering lamp, she hears the very city speak in its sleep, and doubtless talks with her Son in the quiet night. Ah! I never doubted her really for a moment. Be sure she hears, and is compassionate, and is occupied all day long, when because of the noise and the eyes of men one only glances at her from a distance, fearing to worship openly, in praying for her sinners now and as she will do in the hour of their death.

This city of warm brick, with its churches of marble and its palaces of stone, comes in time to hold for us

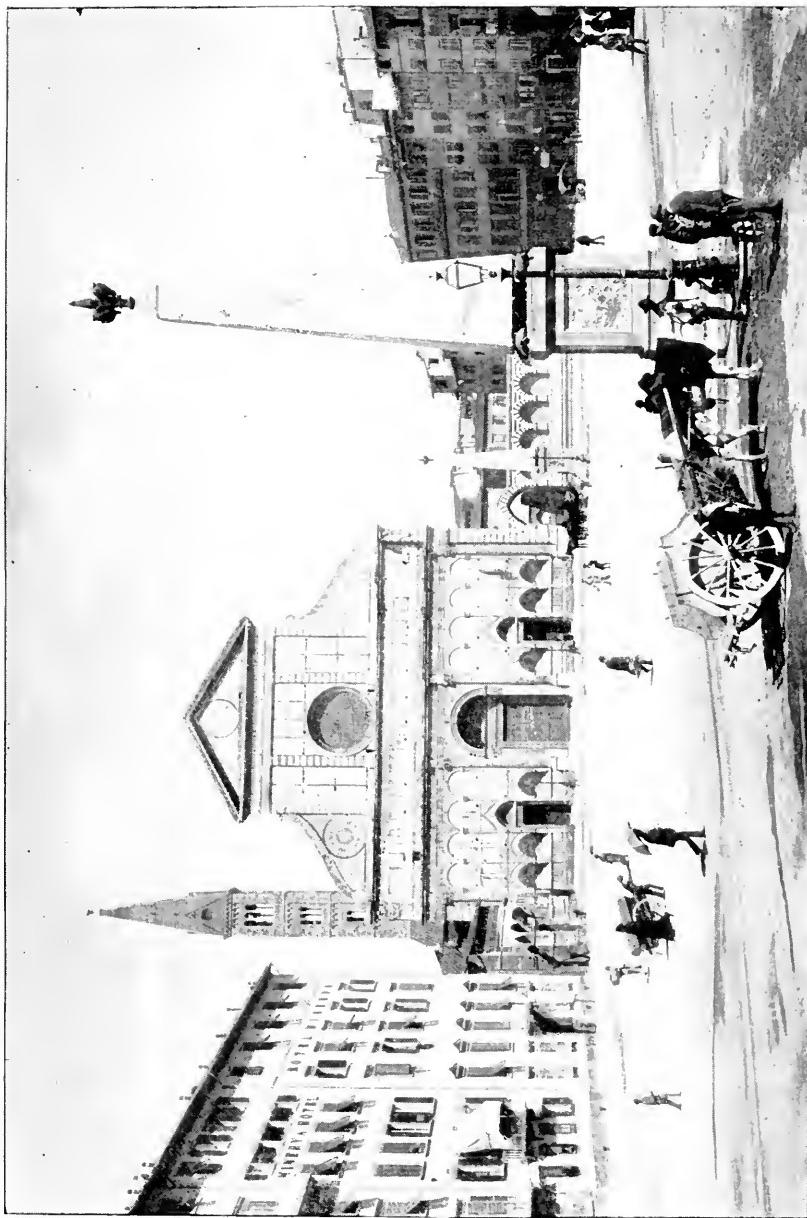


Photo by Lillani Brothers.

SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE.

all our dreams, all the unattainable things in the world. And of all its precious possessions, that which to me at least seems most lovely is the sweet bride of Michael Angelo—Santa Maria Novella. For here at last in Florence is a really beautiful church, the interior not unworthy of the exterior, as is the case with Santa Maria delle Fiore and Santa Croce; moreover, as Mr Ruskin I think is careful to tell one, it was the parish church of Giotto. Magnificent as was Mr Ruskin's enthusiasm for what he had convinced himself in one way or another was lovely and noble and the truth, he was, I think, at least in Florence, a little lacking in charity. It is true I have gazed always with new pleasure on the little fresco work he sets such store by in the cloister, yet I am convinced that many who have loved Florence at least as well as he never became an idolater before that particular piece of fresco. After all, Florence is greater than her greatest sons. Having produced Giotto and buried him, how many other great men, statesmen, poets, and artists, did she not produce without fatigue. Savonarola was no less her son than Giotto, and has proved as immortal too; yet it is easy to feel resentment against the mighty puritan, easier still to fail to do him justice. It is impossible for any one Florentine to sum up and exhaust the city as Mr Ruskin rhetorically imagined. Yet I think that, perhaps, since this courageous and moving dictum of Mr Ruskin's may, strictly speaking, be nonsense, it serves a useful purpose in sending the traveller for

certain to Santa Maria Novella, where he will see other things as fine as Giotto—the frescoes in the Capella degli Spagnuoli, attributed to Taddeo Gaddi and Simone Memmi, for instance, and the Cimabue Madonna, and the church itself. If one so little careful of mere sight-seeing as the present writer may advise the reader in the matter of a guide-book, he would say, go to Messrs Flor & Findel, on the Lung' Arno Acciajoli, and buy ‘Saunterings in Florence,’ by E. Grifi, which is by far the best (and cheapest) book on the city to be had. For other places Mr Hare is better than a wilderness of German Baedekers, and not nearly so compromising.

Having spent a morning in Santa Maria Novella, and vowed return to Cimabue's Madonna, one may find coolness and shade in the convent of San Marco, where one comes upon Savonarola, having passed the place of his martyrdom in the Piazza Signoria on the way. And here indeed one is, on a summer's day, in paradise. Around one blossom the frescoes of that dear and devout soul Fra Angelico da Fiesole. Of all the pictures in the world his little meditations in the tiny cells of his brothers move me most. The Nativity (in cell No. 5), where St Catherine has come to see her bridegroom, and the very angels of heaven hover over the cowshed. The Empty Tomb (in cell No. 8), when Christ rose from the dead, with Mary utterly bewildered and dazzled at the fortune of the world, while Christ unseen looks on as though ready to come to her assistance should she



fall, overcome by joy. The Presentation of Christ (in cell No. 10), where the beautiful babyhood of Il Gesù Cristo is a very vision, such as St Rose of Lima saw when the infant Christ came to play with her and left her beggared. And so, magnificent as are the Annunciation, Angelico's favourite subject, and The Crucifixion, in the chapter house, it is always to these smaller frescoes I return with a never-failing joy. And yet who, looking on the Crucifixion, can desire anything else? Even Kugler with all his science allows that it is in point of religious expression "one of the most beautiful works of art existing." In these figures grouped so simply beneath the three crosses all the ecstasy and sorrow of the world seem to find expression. The hair of Magdalene is like a river of red gold, the Virgin is a pale lily drooping at midday, and Christ upon the Tree of Life glows over all, the very light of the world.

In studying the works of Fra Angelico it is interesting to notice the few colours he uses,—uses symbolically, mystically, one may think, after due and grave consideration of their value and meaning. Thus white is the colour of truth, of virginity, and of God; red of innocence and of the Passion; blue of quietness, calmness, and virginity; green of hope and contemplation; black of death and evil; violet of mourning and penitence; grey of trouble and tribulation; yellow of jealousy and envy; and rose of the victory of Christ with its anguish and sorrow and triumph.

One finds but few of Fra Angelico's works out of Florence, and so while Leonardo is perhaps best studied at Paris or at Milan, Michael Angelo at Rome, and Giotto at Assisi and Padua, Fra Angelico, Botticelli, and Andrea del Sarto are found at Florence, and should be studied there, together with two lesser men, whose chief characteristic was their humanism, who amid all the splendid names that ring in our ears, here in Florence we shall do well to remember, seeing that even among those most famous they are altogether lovely.

XIV.

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA.

FROM the sunrise to the middle day of the world's history, perhaps even to the lowering sun at evening, it would seem there have been seasons which have had a curious fascination for those who have come after. And to us of this century, who have lost so much of the picturesque from life, some of those illuminative days, whose deeds sometimes, whose spirit always, live after them, would seem to have a more direct appeal.

The age of the Renaissance in Italy, with its after-glow in France, dying at last on the same soil from which it had sprung, is one of them, one indeed which we can hardly study too much—hardly give too much thought and patience to the reading of its enigmas.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in which the learning of the ancient world had been re-discovered, in which the graciousness of Plato was a subject of polite conversation, and the Paganism of Greece was beginning to find new half-veiled advocates, pro-

duced many strange personalities, much exquisite work, and a history half legend, half truth, which has laid hold of the mind of mankind, and demanded attention so strenuously that we should not be far wrong in naming it as the most fascinating age in history.

Florence, with its dust and heat, its sweetly shaded valleys, its quaint streets and houses, charms us both by her simplicity and by a strange spirit which seems everywhere in her walls and her pictures. The young girl standing in the doorway with a wonderful gracefulness, a negligent arm behind her head, with contour of parted lips and falling eyelids, just in the shadow, the sun, as it were, trying to see the glory beneath the veiling lids, the breeze just whispering as a lover to her—surely it is some such imaginary portrait as this that conjures up Florence for us.

Yet it would be a gain all the greater because of its impossibility, to get back to the Florence of the Renaissance and walk with Pico della Mirandola or with Simonetta under the orange trees and see the face, all the soft lines, the sadness of the eyes, the wonderful superiority, the exclusiveness of the lines of the body in their own soft earth where they were once so skilfully moulded, which attract the men of our generation so strangely.

About the year 1400, born neither to poverty nor riches, but enjoying, in an age whose characteristic was that it enjoyed itself, an unwearied frugality, an

unending delight in simple things, a child played with the sunbeams, who was to come, by means of these simple things, to some eminence.

His family we are led to believe was not undistinguished, and it was after some opposition, and after some patient but we may be sure dutiful insistence on the part of Luca, that old Simone di Marco della Robbia gave the necessary permission, and apprenticed his son to Leonardo di Ser Giovanni, a goldsmith, from whom Luca was to learn, so far as in him lay, how to become an artist. Leonardo seems to have been a hard taskmaster, and certainly to his scholarly pupil, who never forgot a lesson, who all his life assumed the attitude of the scholar towards his teachers, nay, even his contemporaries, old Giovanni must have been trying indeed. At any rate we find Luca before long in the house of a much more congenial master, one of the greatest sculptors of his day, Lorenzo Ghiberti. From him Luca learned in that loyal way — loyalty to his masters being one of his most pronounced characteristics, amounting almost to a gift with him — to cast in bronze.

His loyalty receives almost touching expression in regard to Giotto, seventy years dead; for he is commissioned to execute panels for Giotto's Campanile, "The Shepherd's Tower," the most glorious tower in the world, and for the time being he, as it were, becomes the pupil of Giotto. So like the master, indeed, are these panels, so Giottesque in feeling and

execution, that it has been supposed Giotto left drawings for them ; but I think, seeing there is nothing to prove any such hypothesis, that knowing Luca's loyalty, it is much more reasonable, more gracious too, perhaps, to think of him as loyal to the great artist and architect whom he with all Florentines would reverence, even to the extent of effacing himself and carrying out that which Giotto was unable to do in the way he believed Giotto would have wished.

Here in the studio of Ghiberti, who could tell such wonderful stories of the world beyond Florence, of that long ramble he made when a boy, starting suddenly during a fit of romantic longing which in the end lasted so long, Luca must often have met Donatello—Donato, Donatello for love, the other great influence in his life. The strong, the terrible power that sometimes seems almost to descend in Donatello, the realism, if one may use such a word in an age that was happily ignorant of what it has come to mean for us, against the sweet, summer-like sentimentalism, the romance, sometimes perhaps the prettiness, of Ghiberti,—these are the two influences which must have borne most strongly on the young Luca even in those early days.

“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve :” “ye cannot serve God and mammon.” But how if neither were mammon ? how if both were good, each in its way ? Luca, contemplating both, wishing to be loyal to both, hesitated, and in the end

chose neither, hesitating to the end of his life. Now he leaned towards Ghiberti, now towards Donatello, but he never chose either method. He hesitated, and hesitating, curiously enough he found salvation. In his great bronze gates for the sacristy in the cathedral of his beloved Florence, we may almost see the struggle it had come to be for him to choose between those two influences. And surely it is more than a fancied difference, surely there is something of his appreciation of both methods, his love of both masters, in those four evangelists, of which St Matthew and St Mark are for Donatello and St Luke and St John for the gentler Ghiberti. His supposed earliest works, his lunettes of the Resurrection and the Ascension in the Cathedral, would seem to have been sculptured rather under the influence of Ghiberti than of his great contemporary, and yet in marked degree, in some aspect of expression, he surpasses them both. For not only has Luca the slow, hesitating choice—a choice that is never really made—of the true scholar, as we see in this wavering which is almost a compromise; but he realises, is indeed the first of his time to realise, in sculpture the power of expressing life. What the Greeks had striven perhaps in vain to attain, that naturalness in sculpture, as though the figure were really about to breathe and put out its hand, that wonderful vagueness of Michael Angelo, akin to nature, by which he attained the same live-giving effect, a something more than mere form, something not frozen, an expression of the spirit in

fact, bloomed in Luca's work like a new wild-flower. Expression, life, the power to express the spirit in stone or bronze or terra-cotta, these are what he really discovered, and not the mere material of his art as Vasari supposes. It is the first exhibition of the Christian idea in sculpture. The whole philosophy of Epicurus, that power or gift of making the most of each moment as it passes; that wonderful eternal moment frozen for ever in Greek sculpture, is gone, and instead we get a wonderful restfulness. The spirit has time to shine forth, and Mary Madonna tells us of the soul, the immortal part of man.

And so Luca, having made this great discovery, hesitates to give himself to either side, is not quite sure perhaps which is the right side, and in hesitating he gradually drifts into a kind of compromise which surely suits that message of his of spirit in life, very happily.

For the first forty-five or fifty years of his life he did little, at least that remains to us: he was a man full of dreams, and possibly, as Vasari leads us to believe, full of invention to give joy to all people.

In the year 1450 his most perfect work in marble was completed—begun and finished within the year—the monument to the Bishop of Fiesole, lately dead, Benozzo Federighi by name. In this work, as one might almost expect, there is a hopefulness, almost a cheerfulness, and a profusion of natural things that is truly Luca's very self—fruits, garlands, grapes, John the Baptist, the Christ and the Virgin, and the old

ecclesiastic too, whose features express not oblivion, not sleep even, but the very spirit of repose after labour; neither the terror of the grave nor the felicity of some sentimental beatitude, but the spirit of rest.

During those fifty years Luca must have been far from idle. Searching for new methods of art, new means of expression, he came upon a new medium by which to express his wonderful discovery. That blue and white enamelled terra-cotta, could it have come from anywhere but Italy, can it live anywhere but in Italy? Luca, searching for some humbler material in which to express himself,—could it be that he wished perhaps to popularise his work?—comes upon this terra-cotta, and chiefly by it, dust though it is, is made immortal. Having, as we have seen, in early life made the sacristy doors with their panels for Santa Maria del Fiore, the Cathedral of Florence, he now with his new discovery crowned them, for over them, where perhaps other less enduring things might not dwell because of the damp, he placed two angels in enamelled terra-cotta.

Among the first to give Luca commissions for this exquisite work in clay was Piero di Cosimo Medici, master practically of Florence and patron of the arts. For him Luca decorated a small book-lined chamber in the great Medici palace built by Cosmo de' Medici. His work was for the ceiling and the pavement, the ceiling being a half sphere. For the hot summer days of Italy, when the streets are a blaze of light and the sun seems

literally to embrace the loved city, this terra-cotta work of Luca's with its cool whites and blues was particularly delightful, bringing really a piece, as it were, of the cool moving sea or the soft sky into a place confined and shut in. And by some curious "trick" or felicity of workmanship he has contrived to give the whole the appearance of being not of many pieces but of one only, as though he had given the place a really settled charm, where, in the summer days, scorching and hot, coolness, temperance might find a safe retreat.

The organ loft by Luca della Robbia made for the Cathedral, his chiefest work, is often compared to that which now stands so near it, the organ loft by Donatello. Luca, as usual with him now, sets out to express the abounding spirit. He proposes to illustrate the 150th Psalm, "Praise the Lord. Praise Him in the sound of the trumpet: praise Him upon the lute and harp. Praise Him in the cymbals and dances: praise Him upon the strings and pipe." For expression this work stands unequalled by any of his contemporaries. For Luca, always happiest we may suppose among children, those simple souls who understood the humble dreamer, has here repaid them in full for all their sympathy. He has made youth a thing of beauty, a joy for ever, giving it a substance, an immortality which in the short elusive morning of human reality it lacked. He always succeeded best with children, understanding them, perhaps feeling

for them, as though those tender ungrown babies were something especially precious to one who all his life had loved best that which was simple. The voices sound on our ears, the throats seem verily to throb, and the eyes show unspeakable worship, joy, thanksgiving. The treble, alto, tenor, and bass, all are heard: it is a triumph of the spirit in the expression of a few youths and maidens.

The choice of the humbler way, the search for meekness, did not go unrewarded. His work in terra-cotta gradually became famous throughout Italy, throughout Europe. He is worked to death, so many desiring to possess the work of the artist who had chosen that which was in itself so poor, and elevated it by the very simplicity, the nobleness and sweetness of his genius, that he is unable to satisfy all their demands. It is like the story of Michael Angelo, who being commanded by the great Medici to model a figure in snow during a snowy winter in the courtyard of the Pitti Palace at Florence, as though in irony gave to the work his mightiest powers, and on that melting snow image lavished his choicest genius, thinking perhaps that that which was to have so short a life, so momentary an existence, the snow melting even as he moulded it, called at least for as much love as his creations in everlasting marble.

It was so with Luca, till at last he had too much to do, Italy, Europe, requiring more from him than he could perform. And so he takes to

him his brothers Ottaviano and Agostino, and more especially his nephew Andrea, taking this last youth into his very heart too, training them in his own new invention, the glorious work in the humble material. And not without success, at least with Andrea, who seems, perhaps from the fact that Luca did take him into his heart, to have caught at times the very spirit of the master. For in Andrea's work we catch an afterglow at least of Luca, and sometimes of Luca at his best.

But he is not even yet satisfied: invention, tireless study for some still more perfect mode of self-expression, was a kind of mania with him. And at last, tired out, he goes to Orleans, to France, to his brother Girolamo, who had succeeded greatly in that country, even, as Vasari says, "acquiring high reputation and great riches." After the labour and heat of the day we may suppose he found rest at last, though but for a little time. Soon after his arrival in France he seems to fade almost to a shadow, like a flower of his own Italy transplanted from its native soil. It is a characteristic of his work. It will not bear removal. That white and blue terra-cotta, so delicate, so cooling, fades, too, away from Italy. It is only really satisfactory on its native soil, of which, after all, it is a product.

He died in France soon after his arrival. His friends brought his body back to Italy, to the tomb of his fathers, to bury him. How could he rest, he who was made of her earth and her sky,

away from Italy, when at last he came to lay himself down? It was a characteristic of him that he should always have conceived of death cheerfully. Not as oblivion, nor even as sleep, as we have seen in that great marble tomb he made for the Bishop of Fiesole, but just as rest—a rest well earned, as though even yet, perhaps—who knows? —there might be work for him to do.

XV.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI.

THE love and enthusiasm for antiquity that colours the age of the Renaissance for us, even to its close, was in reality a search for immortality. That dread of death, common even amongst ourselves, in the very young, the fear of entire forgetfulness, the dread of nothingness, was the soil out of which sprung the beautiful flower we call the Renaissance. And instead of looking forward to the future for that gift of life everlasting, we find the Florentines of that day peering longingly back at the past, certain that there at any rate was a sure immortality, and that in that wonderful culture of antiquity, divided from them by the gulf of darkness called the Middle Age, there was the secret of eternity, the power to confer upon Art a something which would not allow it to be utterly forgotten. It came to be a kind of creed, of almost passionate belief, that to be a scholar was the surest way to save something from the wreck of Time; that learning was a salt which would crystallise their work, giving it an

endurance, an appeal to those coming after, that otherwise it would lack. For Art in those early days was looked upon as something divine, and the artist as only a little lower than the angels, perhaps a true son of God in whom He was well pleased. An example of this disposition of the people toward the artist may be noted in that wonderful reception—it is almost a triumph—which Cimabue received when his Madonna was borne in procession through the streets of Florence to its home in Santa Maria Novella. Even the Church took part in that welcome, as though in reality Madonna Mary had graciously come to them and they had found her a home right in their midst, as near as possible to their own dwellings.

In this age of extremes, then, we shall not be surprised to find great loves and great hates, great virtue and great vice: it was an age of enthusiasm, and it did nothing small. When Art was received with so much reverence even by the people, when its power to move them seems to have been so great, it is not surprising to find the artist passionate in his work, and, feeling the divine spark in him, seeking his own special medium, wherein he may express himself.

For the artist to find the medium through which he may express himself has ever been the great need, coming in later times, indeed, almost to be an end in itself. To come upon it early, to know that one is doing the best with oneself that can be

done, is the prize of the few, and they generally the greatest of all. Most, after much toil, many fruitless pilgrimages, many inventions, find their medium late, perhaps too late, and, looking back on the flowers they have plucked by the way, are content even to leave their own true work undone, thinking, after all, on the pleasantness of the way thither. But there are left those who never find it, men sometimes of real genius or exquisite talent, shown, it is true, in all that they do, but lacking the means to express the true inspiration—the very soul of the artist. It is of such an one I have tried to write, telling you in the simplest way I could of his life and his work. He was a great painter; but he was always above his work, always with the real soul left over, finding at last its true expression not in his own work nor even in himself, but in the work of his most famous pupil. His own genius would find a voice, if not in a noble then in an ignoble passion, if not in art then in life. It is in this way, and because of his failure, or even failure to grasp the secret of his own work, that his name is not over the great constellation of artists that now bears that of another.

About the year 1412 was born in a little mediæval street—called Ardigotione—in Florence, Filippo di Tommaso Lippi, called Fra Lippo Lippi. His mother, poor soul, died in giving him life, and his father, burdened maybe with sorrow, lived only till Lippo was two years old. Frail from his birth, be-

ginning life without a mother's unreplaceable care, we find him shortly in the convent of the Carmelites, just outside whose walls he had begun his life. The monks having forsaken fatherhood, yet yielding to the instinct of nature towards that which is helpless, seem to have taken good care of him, bringing him up in the Offices of the Church, and striving to teach a mind always almost unteachable. For we find him no lover of books, no scholar, but a dreamer of dreams in bright colours, dexterous and ingenious with his hands, so long as his thoughts are allowed to wander on that life-long search of his. And so, while still very young, with the approval of the wondering monks, he, almost untaught, paints a picture in *terra verde* in the cloisters of their convent, a picture to please his fathers, the subject being a Pope confirming the Rule of the Carmelites. They praised him, for did they not love him, they who had rescued him from death almost on his arrival in this world of which they knew so little? And so at the age of seventeen he thinks he wishes to be a painter, and without a thought throws off the clerical habit.

He was ever a dreamer of dreams, and even in his own time his dreams came to be a part of his actual life. Legends, stories grew up regarding him that seem, under the search-light of modern criticism, to have had but little reality. It is said he was out in a boat one day, thinking, thinking, when he was made prisoner suddenly by some Moorish pirates and taken a captive to Barbary, whence he returned only after

eighteen months, when they discovered he could draw, and, so the legend runs, for this they took him to be a god. He landed at Naples on his return, where he painted a picture for King Alfonso which was placed in the private chapel of the king. But he was still undecided. In truth all this legend is but an allegory of his life-long search for his own medium. Discontented, out of humour with his art, he longed for Florence, and at length indeed returned there, and arrived, painted a picture for the nuns of Sant' Ambrogio, now in the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence.

It was the age of Lorenzo Ghiberti and Donatello, the age, therefore, of the great schism in art which has lasted ever since — the division between the Naturalists and the Mystics. How to choose? It does not trouble Filippo for an instant: he who had travelled and loved the world, even to the desertion of that quiet cloistral home, is a Naturalist already. His angels, even in the work he has already done, are just boys, not angels at all really, yet fulfilling the requirements of even the most exacting devotee in a certain humanism, a certain delight in mere living, the sensuous side of worship, which is far indeed from coarseness, and farther still from that Middle Age just gone by for ever—the age of Asceticism.

That picture of his in Sant' Ambrogio made him known to Cosimo de' Medici, who became his friend and protector. So he painted a picture of the Nativity of Christ for the wife of Cosimo de' Medici, and remembering perhaps the circumstances of his

own birth, gives an unwonted faintness—at any rate for him—to the expression of the Madonna: a wish, as it were, not to live; a desire for quiet, as though she were thinking of the “lowliness of His handmaiden.”

The lust of the eye, the desire of life, the power latent in all art to enjoy itself,—it was in expressing these that Filippo came almost to believe he had found his medium, and when engaged in the feverish search, he has time for nothing else, has thoughts for nothing else. Cosimo de' Medici wishes him to finish some paintings on which he is engaged for the Palace, but Lippo is up and down Florence with no thought for work; that terrible desire of life in him eating his very soul away in its hunger, its desire to be appeased. So Cosimo shut him in—a kindly act, at any rate he thought so—that he might not waste time so precious to Florence, to Italy, perhaps to the world. But Lippo, insatiable of life, of that dear irresponsible going to and fro, cannot endure confinement for longer than two days; so making a rope of the sheets of the bed, he slips down again to the sun and shade, the dust and the bustle, the roses and love of that Florence of which he can never tire. Cosimo is disturbed, distracted, at his absence, terrified for his safety, and on his return at last, seeing that Filippo must have his way, promises to shut him up no more, endeavouring ever after by kindness alone to keep him at work, which for his own sake he must—so it seems to Cosimo---finish.

But now he has sent work to Rome, he is known in Padua, Cardinal Barbo, patron of the Arts, has commended his grace, and some distant relations at length hold out welcoming arms to him from Prato. Thither he journeys, staying for months together with Fra Diamente, a friend of his youth from the convent at Florence. The nuns of Santa Margherita—he seems always to have had a curious fascination for women—commission him to paint a Madonna for the high altar of their church, and so by chance, as it were, and slow stages, as he would have thought, he comes to what must have been the crisis of his life—the desire of life, the lust of the eye, triumphing completely at last.

In the cool church on sunny mornings, or perhaps in aimless wanderings, still in search of that which ever evades him, he has seen Lucrezia Buti, a nun of a curious fascinating beauty that holds him as in a vice. And Naturalist as he is, with no thought beyond, behind his picture, he begs her as model for his Madonna. Persuasive, eloquent, graceful, he is not denied. He paints her, and while at work suddenly finds himself, for the first time in his life perhaps, really in love. From desire to accomplishment was a matter of mere wishing in most things with Filippo. We see that, in the ease with which he accomplished that earliest picture for the Carmelites in Florence, almost without any teaching. Lucrezia is easily persuaded, and on a certain day when they had gone forth to do honour to a relic—the girdle

presented to St Thomas by our Lady—he bears her from their keeping. Disgrace falls where it is ill deserved, on the Nuns of Santa Margherita, and the father of Lucrezia, justly angry at the seduction of his daughter, in vain makes every effort to recover her, and in the end is supposed to have caused Lippo's death by poison. It was the outcome of this romantic union, their only son, Filippino Lippi, who carried on the tradition of his father's work, becoming, though in a somewhat different style, "a most excellent and famous painter," as Vasari says. Poor as he always had been and was, theirs must have been a curious existence. Outlawed, at any rate for a time, by the Church, with no friend but Cosimo de' Medici, Filippo needed then all that Lucrezia could give of love and sympathy in order to justify even to himself the wild act he had been so certain would mean happiness.

Pictures of his about this period are not rare; for Cosimo seems to have exercised his influence and arranged matters with the Church. So we find him painting in the Augustine church of Santo Spirito in Florence; and in Prato, too, in the church of San Domenico there still remains a Nativity by him. His drapery is always fine, and his monks are full of some true spirit of devotion that is wanting in many a greater master. But it is in his Bambini and in his boy angels that, in so far as he found expression in painting, he expresses himself. They are above all else natural, boisterous children from the streets

of Florence, with something humorous in the bent heads, and lips that should be murmuring Aves. In his picture of the Martyrdom of St Stephen he has depicted brutal fury and lust for blood with an extraordinary power. Always vivid, there is something demoniac in the cruelty, the grinding teeth, and stretched lips of the mob that stones the Saint. His Madonnas seem to me to be only half realised. It was a later hand that found expression for all that Filippo had dreamed ; for among his pupils we find him who was to supplant him, to say all or nearly all that Filippo has said and much more that Filippo had never dreamed of. I mean Sandro Botticelli.

Sandro was his pupil, and certainly no small measure of Filippo's unexpressed genius fell to his share. But Botticelli was a man who needed no helping introductions, a man well able to stand alone. Still I think we can trace Lippo's influence in some of Botticelli's early work, and especially in the hair and heads of his Madonnas. Fra Filippo died in his fifty-eighth year, in the year 1469.

To Fra Diamante, with whom he had taken that eventful journey to Prato, he left his only son Filippino, then ten years old. And in due time Filippino goes to school to Sandro Botticelli, and when he is older learns from those careful lips the life of his father.

So died Filippo the painter, a man of immense genius, wandering through this world trying to find the medium through which to express himself. He

never succeeded, and he died greater than his work. Some compensation for a life set with pitfalls and sorrow from birth, we may believe he found, some truth after all, perhaps, though meagre at best, in the old proverb, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." A Naturalist by inspiration and conviction, a dreamer, a poet, in a way that is not elaborately artistic but close to life, he was not one of the greatest painters, but a great artist. A man of curious fascination, a man of his own time; for out of that age of enthusiasm, of extremes, there would have been no place for Lippo Lippi. Lucky in this, that he did not die without having known what life meant, what love meant. in the search for which we are all so much in earnest.

XVI.

AT BOLOGNA.

NEVER one of the more beautiful cities of Italy, Bologna is nevertheless a place of some interest, chiefly because of its school of painting. But at first sight what strikes the traveller as most characteristic is the arcades, that give to this old-world city a curious individuality. There are indeed really miles of them, so that it is said to be possible to pass through the whole city under cover.

It is, however, rather as the city of curious leaning towers than as the city of arcades that Bologna eventually appears to us, with a kind of sombreness in her aspect that, it may be, prevents her being overmuch loved especially by the traveller. But at last, when the mere curiosity for something strange has exhausted itself upon the leaning towers, Bologna remains memorable to us as the home of a very remarkable school of painting, and as the birthplace of the goldsmith and painter Francesco Francia. Born here in 1450, Francia appears to have been the son of humble parents who apprenticed him to a gold-

smith in the city. Vasari says of him, “ His manner and conversation were so gentle and obliging, that he kept all around him in good humour, and had the gift of dissipating the heavy thoughts of the most melancholy by the charms of his conversation: for these reasons he was not only beloved by all who were acquainted with him, but in course of time he obtained the favour of many princes and nobles, Italian and others.” Having applied himself to the study of design, “ the desire for greater things awakened within him,” the result of which is visible to us to-day in San Giacomo Maggiore and in the Accademia.

According to Vasari, Francia took great delight in the casting of medals: “ his works,” says that irresistible biographer, “ are most admirable, as may be judged from some on which is the head of Pope Julius II. so lifelike that these medals will bear comparison with those of Carradosso,” the famous cutter of dies of Pavia. And so a large part of Francia’s life was passed as director of the Mint of Bologna. Giovanni Bentivoglio, who was tyrant there in 1490, employing him not alone as a cutter of dies but as a painter too, as may be seen in the chapel of the Bentivogli in San Giacomo Maggiore, where Francia painted the lovely altar-piece, one of his most perfect works, of the Madonna and Child with angels, and SS. Florian, Augustine, John the Evangelist, and Sebastian, which he signed Franciscus Francia, Aurifex, “ as though he wished to imply that he be-

longed to the goldsmith's art, not to that of painting." And perhaps in a way he did not mean, this is goldsmith's work indeed in its perfection, and because of a certain golden light that seems to burst from the picture. The figure of St Sebastian is, I think, among all his work perhaps the grandest figure he ever painted.

There are no less than nine of Francia's works in the Accademia. One of these, a Nativity, is especially delightful in that it contains the portrait of Signor Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio and of the poet Girolamo Pandolfi di Cario. Vasari declares the portrait of Monsignore de' Bentivoglio to be an excellent likeness : "he wears the dress of a pilgrim, in which he returned from Jerusalem." The figure in the background with folded hands is generally supposed to be Bentivoglio, though from Vasari's description one might suppose the figure in the foreground to the left, with the pilgrim's staff in his hand, to be Monsignore.

Having thus proved himself a master in oil, he determined to see if he could not succeed equally well in fresco. He accomplished his desire on the walls of the Palazzo Bentivoglio, which, however, was destroyed by order of Pope Julius II.; but we may see to-day in the chapel of St Cecilia, attached to the church of San Giacomo Maggiore, Francia's frescoes of The Marriage of Cecilia and Valerian and The Burial of Cecilia—the rest of the work here being that of his pupils. These frescoes are

among his noblest works,—their simplicity and beauty and grace enchanting us from the beginning in spite of the ruin that is overtaking them. From this time Francia seems to have had more work than he could possibly perform, and doubtless a number of paintings passing under his name are really the work of his pupils. He appears still to have continued his work in metal—his die-cutting; although the exile of the Bentivoglio family seems to have caused him sorrow, his fame suffered nothing. Many of his works, like those he executed for the Duke of Urbino, were utterly lost. Vasari continues: “While Francia was then living in so much glory and was peacefully enjoying the fruits of his labours, Raphael was working in Rome, where there daily flocked around him numerous foreigners from various parts, and among them many gentlemen of Bologna anxious to see the works of that master, and as it most commonly happens that every one is ready to extol the distinguished persons of his native place, so these Bolognese began to entertain Raphael with praises of the life and works and genius of Francia until so much friendship was established between those two masters by means of words that they saluted each other by letter.” Mrs Foster in her edition of Vasari appends one of these letters, as follows:—

MY DEAR MESSER FRANCESCO,—I have this moment received your portrait, which has been brought to me safely and without having suffered any injury whatever by Bazotto. I thank you heartily for it; it is singularly beautiful, and so

life-like that I sometimes fancy myself to be near you, listening to your words. I beg you to have patience with me and to excuse the long delay of mine which perpetual and weighty occupations have prevented me from executing with my own hand, as we agreed, and I did not think it becoming to permit that it should be done by my scholars and only retouched by myself. On the contrary, it will be proper that all shall be able to perceive how little my work is capable of comparing with your own. I beg that you will grant me your friendly indulgence; you may yourself have experienced what it is to be deprived of one's freedom and to be obliged to live in the service of nobles. Meanwhile I send you, through the same person, who returns in about six days, another drawing, that of the *Præsepio*, already known to you, but very different, as you will see, from the picture which you have honoured with so much praise. And this, I constantly hear, you are pleased to bestow on my attempts, insomuch that I must blush for myself, as indeed I may well do, with respect to the trifle I now send you, but you must accept it as a token of my respect and affection rather than for any other cause. If I, on my part, might possess your story of Judith, I should certainly treasure it among my most valued and dearest possessions. The Honourable Signor Dartany is awaiting his little Madonna with great desire, as is Cardinal Riario his larger one; of all which Bazotto will inform you more minutely. I shall myself see them with all the pleasure and satisfaction with which I always see and recommend your works, than which I find none more beautiful or executed better. Continue to hold me in affection, as I hold you with my whole heart; being ever bound to your service, and truly your own

RAFFAELE SANZIO.

Francia, now an old man, greatly desired to see Raphael's works, and by a piece of the good fortune

that seems to have followed him all his days, a picture—the St Cecilia, now in the Accademia—came to Bologna for a chapel in San Giovanni in Monte, Raphael, by way of compliment, addressing it to the care of Francia himself; and, his legend continues, when he saw at last the very work of the divine Raphael, he perceived “his error and the foolish presumption with which he had weakly believed in his own superiority. . . . He was utterly confounded, but nevertheless caused the painting to be placed with all care and diligence in the chapel for which it was intended in the church of San Giovanni in Monte; but having become like a man beside himself, he took to his bed a few days after, appearing to himself to be almost as nothing in art when compared with what he had believed himself and what he had always been considered. Thus he died, many believe, of grief, . . . in 1528, receiving honourable interment from his sons in Bologna.” Almost the whole of this story has been questioned, however, and it is even asserted that Francia had for a long time previous to his death been well acquainted with Raphael’s work.

Beyond anything in Bologna the genius of Francia haunts the traveller, constraining him, perhaps almost against his will, to love this curious city of colonnades and leaning towers, restful enough now after its fierce and angry youth. It stands like a kind of uncouth Hermes, where three nations meet, almost unnoticed in the shade of its cloistered streets.

XVII.

A NOTE ON RAVENNA.

AFTER all, when the unique historical value of Ravenna is forgotten or ignored for a time by the traveller, it is always as the city of pine woods she is remembered, set in the solitude not far from the sea-shore. Yet it is only when some sense of her history remains in the mind, to colour the natural beauty and perfection of her unique and solitary loveliness, that even her pine woods can be rightly loved, and their secrets become a possession of the traveller who passes by.

Not only, at least for the sentimental, as the city of Dante is she known, proud Ravenna by the eastern sea, but as the city beloved by Byron, the home of "the Guiccioli."

I have been here [he writes, June 29, 1819] these four weeks, having left Venice a month ago. I came to see my "Amica," the Countess Guiccioli, who has been, and still continues, very unwell. . . . She is only in her seventeenth, but not of a strong constitution. She has a perpetual cough and intermittent fever, but bears up most gallantly in

every sense of the word. Her husband (this is his third wife) is the richest noble in Ravenna and almost of Romagna ; he is also *not* the youngest, being upwards of three-score, but in good preservation. All this will appear strange to you who do not understand the meridian morality nor our way of life. . . . I have my horses here, saddle as well as carriage, and ride and drive every day in the forest, the *Pineta*, the scene of Boccaccio's novel and Dryden's fable of Honoria, etc. ; and I see my Dama every day. . . .

And these woods, through which the sea-wind whispers, somewhat sadly one may think, of the innumerable centuries that have watched the splendour and the ruin of this city, are full of song, for the sea with its never-changing music is never far away from the thoughts of him who wanders over the plains of that Ravenna which was a naval station of Cæsar Augustus.

As John Addington Symonds seems to suggest, the proper companion during a stay in Ravenna is Dante's "Purgatorio," Canto xxviii. :—

"Through the celestial forest, whose thick shade
With lively greenness the new springing day
Attempered, eager now to roam and search
Its limits round, forthwith I left the bank,
Along the champain leisurely my way
Pursuing, o'er the ground, that on all sides
Delicious odour breathed. A pleasant air
That intermitted never, never veered,
Smote on my temples, gently as a wind
Of softest influence : at which the sprays,
Obedient all, lean'd trembling to that part
Where first the holy mountain casts his shade ;

Yet were not so discovered, but that still
Upon their top the feathered choristers
Applied their wonted art, and with full joy
Welcomed those hours of prime and warbled shrill
Amid the leaves, that to their jocund lays
Kept tenour ; even as from branch to branch
Along the piny forests on the shore
Of Chiassi, rolls the gathering melody
When Eolus hath from his cavern loosed
The dripping south."

The mystical figure of Dante is, indeed, never far from the mind in this the city where he died. It is chiefly as a place full of the memories of the unforgettable dead that Ravenna is dear to us to-day. One is perhaps a little overwhelmed on arrival when turning to the necessary guide-book to find it crammed with nothing but inhuman learning. It is curious how profoundly lacking in charm Baedeker can be in Italy, since he seemed to promise such romance in the library at home! Valuable as it may be to the traveller to realise for himself the Ravenna and Classis of Roman times, the siege of the city by the Ostrogoths under Theodoric their king, the gift of the place by Charlemagne to the Holy See,—it is of none of these things that one traveller at least is content to think in a place so passionate and so austere, but of Dante dreaming of far-off Florence by the sea-shore, and of Boccaccio's beautiful tale, and of Byron's passion for Countess Guiccioli. To me, at least, of all places in the world Ravenna is the least like a museum. Yet the guide-books of every shade of red would make of her one of the chief museums of

Italy. To me she is a dream, a vision seen through a grey-blue air over a passionate sea by the light of a few stars and the summer night. Herself a dead and cindered passion, one may sometimes imagine her as she was in her splendour. Among all her magnificent treasures—the mausoleum of Galla Placida, the tomb of Dante, the baptistery, the chapel of the Arcivescovado, the church of San Apollinare Nuovo, the palace and tomb of Theodoric, and the church of San Apollinare in Classe,—she is herself more precious than they all, forgotten utterly by the world, still roaming in her marvellous Pineta in which she has perhaps lost her way.

XVIII.

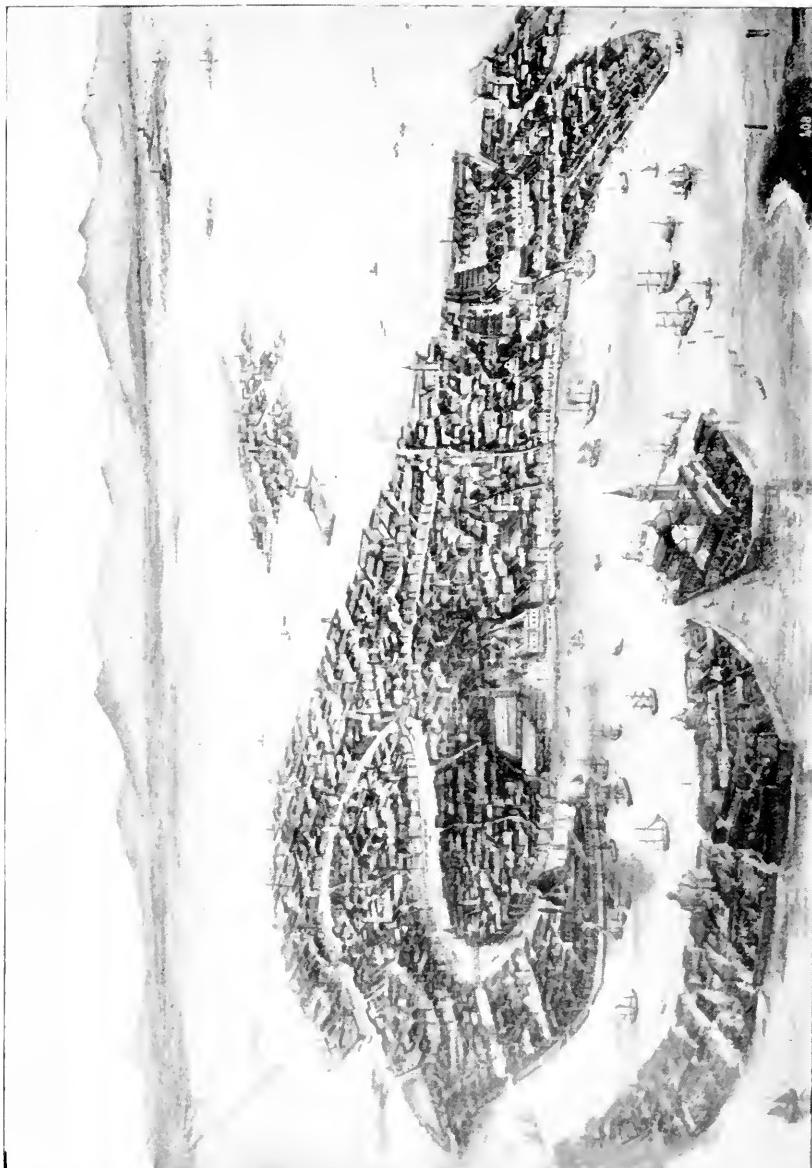
AT VENICE.

LIKE a vast precious stone sinking into the mud and ooze of her lagoons Venice is to-day vanishing from our earth in the sea distance and her lapsing tides. Glorified by our dreams and her smouldering tragic sunsets she is gradually disappearing beyond the remotest of horizons. She, too, like the lovely nude courtesans of her greatest painters, seems to shine with a rich glow of her own, and "almost to illumine the sky rather than to receive light from it." Through her marvellous and dying streets the wet sea-wind passes with the same immortal melody that Wagner caught in the herdsman's tune, played on a pipe before the castle on the rocky height from which are seen the wide and sad horizons of the sea in the third act of "*Tristan und Isolde*," and on the walls of her mouldering palaces is deposited the salt gathered by the wind over many miles of water glistening in the silence and the sun. Perhaps Venice may stand for the tragedy of our modern world. She is dying so

From an old Print.

VIEW OF VENICE.

Photo by Llinari Brothers.



slowly under the glittering indifferent stars. Through her streets rush the penny steamers, like horrible bacilli in the veins of one dying of a dreadful fever. They care nothing for her beauty, and are perhaps unconscious that they are destroying her, being occupied with their own thoughts, their own little life. Within her palaces, innumerable and splendid, the canvases that reflect her ancient beauty and magnificence decay too and fade under the glances of the vulgar and foolish tourist. For how long has she asked in vain who will defend Beauty, Beauty distressed now as never before, despised and rejected by the vulgar and barbarous century that has been captured by lust of gold and sensuality and ugliness? I at least have no words to express my contempt, my hatred, and my despair of a world that has destroyed so fair a thing. I hate how bitterly, how ineffectually these bestial multitudes that without understanding or knowledge are trampling Beauty down beneath their million hoofs. Ah, how shall I tell, without an emotion that in a despicable vile world of mechanics will seem ridiculous, all my loathing, all my horror! O Demos, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, thou who hast in thy turn conquered, thou also in thy turn shalt die, despicably die at last, and men shall laugh together and be glad. Humanity, once the mistress of poets, philosophers, and heroes, is now its own "pimp and pander, its own adorer and assassin." It, too, has sinned more vilely than the most contemptible of devils. Like

an immense flock of sheep afflicted with fly, unclean, diseased, filthy, and abominable, humanity follows, whither it knows not, stamping underfoot the glory and the beauty and the loveliness of our world. Ah! he that goeth about to persuade a multitude that it is never more to be despised shall never want for laughter. But this at least is within my power, this at least is part of my office, to defend my dream. Though the Great Beast swallow me up quite, ever and ever I will hate it. I will laugh in its eyes, and smite it in the face, though still unconsciously it destroy me. Not less for the fear I have of its triumph, but rather to the utmost because of it, I will defend my vision, the beauty it has never seen, the thought it has never been able to comprehend, the freedom and the ancient order, and the virtue that can never utterly pass away, in spite of the drunken assaults of the slaves and fools of King Demos, the greed of the tradesmen, the cheating of the grocers, the savagery of the mechanics, the bestiality of the Great Beast. In all the boasting parliaments of earth they proclaim Demos king and greet him with the funeral salutation, O king, live for ever!—already his body that is but reprieved from death, condemned and unclean, stinks of the inevitable worm. We shall return: be of good cheer, Beauty has but turned from us for a moment to look into the face of God. She alone is immortal, calm, and composed, while Humanity in abject terror stutters to the grave. In

spite of hideous wrongs, in spite of the awful whines and groans of the children of the Great Beast, who never having seen the sun fear to die, in spite of the most terrible sins and destruction and cruelty and murder, we must never despair. Though but few in number, it is we who possess the mastery in the end—we the poets, the artists, the soldiers of Beauty. We will pierce the Great Beast with spears of ridicule and satire, we will crush him with the majesty of the syllables of our mother tongue—we will overwhelm him with legions of beautiful words. His slaves we will disperse with the whips of our scorn and wit, for when they see the terrible and beautiful banners of our Lady they will falter and be afraid and beseech of us our tyranny. But in that day may God forget that He is Love, may our Lady forget her Mercy. O Poets, in this our night forget not your office; defend the vision you have seen, the thought that is immaculate in your souls!

Thus shall we avenge Venice upon her destroyers, and preserve at least the suggestion of that beauty which was once named Venezia.

“Does it not strike you,” says Perdita, seated in her gondola, to her lover, one September evening in Venice, in D’Annunzio’s latest romance—“Does it not strike you that we seem to be following the princely retinue of dead Summer? There she lies sleeping in her funeral boat all dressed in gold, like the wife of a Doge, like a Loredana or a Morosina,

or a Soranza of the enlightened centuries; and the procession is taking her to the island of Murano, where some masterly lord of fire will make her a crystal coffin, and the walls of the coffin shall be of opal, so that when once submerged in the Laguna she may at least see the languid play of the seaweed through her transparent eyelids, and while awaiting the hour of resurrection give herself the illusion of having still about her person the constant undulation of her hair." Something of this voluptuous dreaminess remains with Venice to-day in spite of all. She still has gold upon her garments. On the very first morning as one gazes out over the still waters, San Giorgio rises before one like a rosy lily, its mighty bell-tower tipped with a golden angel. One's first impression indeed is one of rosiness, as though some indefinite rosy light shone through everything here.

As one wanders about Venice to-day so quietly in a sombre gondola, watching her, throned there on her piles, sink into the mud, one seems to be witnessing some magnificent tragedy. As evening is shrouded by night the singers in their fantastic barges greet one over the mysterious waters with the music of mandolin and guitar and warm Italian voices. Life, like some fantastic play, seems to drift by one as in a dream. To be attentive to every sound and sight, just that, it is sufficient. One is almost impatient of Mr Ruskin, who would appear to have exhausted Venice, and yet missed her most important secrets.

For it is here in the most tourist-ridden city in Italy that one can best perceive the glory of those things which have been, without effort, adrift in a gondola watching the reflections in the waters. St Mark's, of which even the most insular must have heard so much, never becomes quite real to us, is always more or less an insubstantial vision. One wanders up and down the lofty galleries among the innumerable figures of the mosaics, under the blessed uplifted hands of the Virgin or the large overshadowing wings of an archangel "an hundred cubits high," almost as we might wander in heaven among saints and angels, with whom, after all, we have very little in common.

San Marco is, indeed, less like a church than we had perhaps expected. The place, as has been well said, is like to the sea upon which it is built, uneven or rising in little, little waves. The other churches tell us almost nothing but that we are in what was once a splendid and magnificent city. Perhaps Santa Maria della Salute is the most romantic, standing as she does at the gate, that all going in or passing out may adore her. It is only after many days that the picture-gallery contains anything for us but other splendid spaces of colour, less magnificently voluptuous than are to be found everywhere in the city herself. Gradually her waterways, perhaps, become less romantic and more real—one has time to think a little, one's emotion is less ready. It is at this moment that we perceive the marvellous richness

of her museums and her details. On getting into a gondola one desires to go somewhere, one is no longer content to drift. Then is the time to depart or to remain for ever. Once immersed in her history and her art, the story of her valour and her merchandise, the visible splendour of her visions, the profound temperance of her religion, the wisdom of her government, the abyss of her corruption, the traveller is doomed to love her and never to leave her. One begins to watch the tourists in companies or couples seeking out her loveliness or her renown, always in vain. One begins to understand that the end of one's own passion for her must be despair. Day by day, little by little, she sinks into mud. Even the smoke of the steamers is beginning to stain her stainless marbles. The filth of ages churned up by the screws and the paddle-wheels is beginning to cling to her splendid robes. It is only in the evening one may occasionally look into her eyes and view her very soul. She used to gather about her innumerable ships, that sailed at her bidding and were precious in her eyes; now they hoot at her and despise her on her piles. She wedded the sea in her youth, and it is he who at the last will save her from the savages who have deflowered her. Gradually he, her immortal lover, is gathering her into his embrace; soon he will kiss her on the mouth and cleanse her from all the abominations that we have made her suffer. For she is too beautiful for our little day; she has attained immortality, and we who must die hate her therefor—our very thoughts

are an insult to her. But he who is her husband is rising irresistibly, and will one day surround her with his inviolable silence, his immaculate purity, his everlasting strength.

Thus, when I evoke her image, does she appear to me enthroned on her piles sinking into the mud encircled by the sea. And believing as I do that one day a great cry will go up for her beauty and her splendour and her strength when it is too late, I desire nothing better than to be remembered as one who loved her and that for which she stands, and hated with bitterness and despair the Great Beast who destroyed her, and whom her spirit will one day everlasting vanquish.

To think of Venice without the Campanile of St Mark is to any one who has ever known her intimately almost an impossibility. For it was not the Piazza di San Marco alone that the famous bell-tower dominated, but all Venice too, across whose silent ways that bell, sounded by the watchman on the summit every quarter of an hour by day and night, no longer sounds. So passes the glory of the world.

Begun in 902 under Doge Pietro Tribuno, it was not till 1150, under Doge Domenico Morosini, that it was finished so far as the belfry, which was added under Doge Leonardo Loredan in 1510. The belfry and pyramid then added, completing the shaft, were the work of Buono; the belfry was a beautiful “open

loggia of four arches in each face," and commanded a magnificent view of Venice and her islands. The whole tower, including the angel which tipped it, was 323 feet high, while the base measured 42 feet. And now that it has fallen a mere mass of ruin 100 feet high in the Piazzis, we are beginning to realise perhaps what we have lost. For four hundred years not one of our countrymen has visited Venice without being astonished at the beauty of the Campanile. John Evelyn thus writes of it in his 'Diary' concerning his visit to Venice in 1645 :—

Having fed our eyes with the noble prospect of the island of St George, the galleys, gondolas, and other vessels passing to and fro, we walked under the cloisters on the other side of this goodly piazza, being a most magnificent building, the design of Sansorino. Here we went into the *zecca* or mint. . . . After this we climbed up the tower of St Mark, which we might have done on horseback, as 'tis said one of the French kings did, there being no stairs or steps, but returns that take up an entire square on the arches 40 feet, broad enough for a coach. This steeple stands by itself, without any church near it, and is rather a watch-tent in the corner of the great piazza, 230 feet in height, the foundation exceeding deep ; on the top is an angel that turns with the wind, and from hence is a prospect down the Adriatic as far as Istria and the Dalmatian side, with the surprising sight of this miraculous city lying in the bosom of the sea in the shape of a lute, the numberless islands tacked together by no fewer than 450 bridges.

Mr John Evelyn seems to have made some mistake as to the height of the tower ; and indeed though, as he

says, the foundation was exceeding deep, it was not deep enough to prevent our grief.

But the Campanile of St Mark is not the only tower in Venice that we hold precious. In a halo of mist in early morning, sailing as it were in a sea as smooth and blue and transparent as the sky itself, rises the island of St George, with its church and monastery and its mighty bell-tower, tipped too with a golden angel that looks like a tall lily standing in the serene waters of some lake of fancy. Indeed, one's first impression almost of Venice is one of rosiness, as though some soft indefinite rosy light shone through everything there. And it is from this Tower of San Giorgio Maggiore that, as I think, the finest view of Venice is to be seen ; finer than that from the Tower of St Mark, since one is as it were really outside Venice, almost in the sea, which, tired and motionless in the heat, completely surrounds one. The Church of San Giorgio Maggiore is the work of Palladio, and was begun in 1565. It is not long since Roman remains were discovered on the island, that was in old days called Isola dei Cipressi—the island of the cypresses. It would seem that there was a Benedictine monastery here so long ago as 985. The Doge Domenico Michele is buried within the Church of Palladio. It was he who brought the two granite columns from Syria that are now and have been since 1180 the chiefest monument of the Piazzetta, exquisitely visible from San Giorgio ; with these he also brought the body of San Isodoro, a not less precious

gift. Over his tomb are carved the words, “Terror Græcorum hic jacet.” The monastery, together with how many others in Italy, has been secularised, and is now used as an artillery barracks!

It is perhaps from this island that one has the finest view of the Doge’s Palace, a dream of splendour in the distance; and one cannot help asking oneself as one gazes on so much beauty, How long will it remain with us to rejoice us of the modern world? For though the fall of St Mark’s Tower came as a surprise at least to the outer world, though it would appear those responsible for the buildings of Venice had frequently been warned by their own architect of its inevitable fall unless various repairs were undertaken, it is not so long since we were told that that side of the ducal palace from which springs the Bridge of Sighs was gradually sinking into the mud, whither—in how short a time!—all Venice must surely follow. The inevitable decay of the piles of white poplar wood, driven into the mud, the dredging of the lagoon and the tideway for the huge modern ships, the wash and swirl and hurry of the passing steamboats up and down the Grand Canal that was surely never meant for them,—all have contributed toward the downfall of that majestic and lovely tower whose loss we have as yet hardly realised, whose fall has left our world by how great a thought less lovely than of old.

On one’s first coming to her, Venice has a strange fascination for even the most philistine tourist, nor is

that first impression unenduring. It is easy to understand and to describe her obvious beauty, the mystery of that limitless horizon, the voluptuous glory of sunset; the delicate and fragile splendour of dawn—even her numberless islands; the blue and grey and silver in which the twilight dresses her; the music of mandolin and guitar and the voices of the gondoliers echoing among her half-deserted palaces, that bear the names of princely families that have passed for ever. A sensuous, and amid all that dead and dying loveliness around perhaps a sensual emotion has from the first almost entire possession of the traveller; and this, as I think, is no false impression but a profound truth, that is true enough to be obvious—perceived by the most casual passer-by. A largesse of colour that is in itself a kind of rich music, fierce and splendid, possessed of many a dying fall, awaits all who may come to her, suggesting to them the galop of the bugles, the triumphant assurance of the scarlet trumpets and all their insolent joy, the thunder of innumerable drums deadening thought, and the exquisite honey of violins and harps, the wrathless passion of the mandolin, the balanced wisdom of violoncellos. It is in some such emotional rapture as this that one leaves her after staying but a few weeks with her in summer time. For she seems to be fulfilled even now with a kind of riotous joy beyond any other city in our world. But it is not thus she will appear to those who have long lived beside her silent ways, who have learned to know her very soul.

She is not really joyful at all, but profoundly sad ; her ecstasy of beauty is over, and the sunsets only gild a dying city, only glorify her last mysterious hours. For her husband the sea, whom she wedded in her youth with a ring of gold and ruled so imperiously for many years, has robed himself just before twilight with heavenly gold and crimson and his own white and blue ; patiently he has waited these many years, till she has grown tired of conquest and glory and is ready to sink into the arms of him who has loved her from the beginning. Ah, no, she is not joyful : she is thinking perhaps of all those years that he has waited, or of her own bespattered glory, and her beauty that is almost a ruin. Is it thus she thinks in the solitude and silence of her limitless horizon, in the mysterious loneliness of the lagoons in the sunshine under her wide heaven, before she goes down to the depths of the sea ? Still the gondolas at evening steal back from the Lido, like ghosts of winged Hermes, silently into the city as night descends from the mountains far away. Still the stars peer down from an unimaginable height, and seem like great golden water-lilies on the waters of the lagoon. And everywhere and at all hours there is a kind of music : perhaps it is the weeping of the oar ; perhaps the whisper of the lagoon grass through which the gondola passes, cleaving a disappearing lane as it goes ; perhaps the musical blow of the boat itself on the water, meeting the south wind coming over the sand-dunes.

And at evening this music only becomes more distinct, more passionate, resolving itself into singing heard in the distance to the accompaniment of mandolin or guitar.

Under the unsathomable serenity of her sky she still draws breath at evening, but how languidly! And we too think of heaven, and with her just touch it perhaps during the space of one heart's beat. Maybe in the dusk she is praying that her soul may be relieved of this disorderly throng of sensible things. Hers has been one of those sublime moments that have no return, and now her last lover of all these countless ones, Night with its warm, damp breath, has touched her eyelids as with a kiss; for she has turned her face to the wind, the wind that has passed over the sea. And he, her true husband—how can we doubt for a moment that he will possess her at the last, seeing the infinite persistence of the waves, the perseverance of the foam, the imperceptible wearing away of the rocks, the furious beating of the wind, and all his travail and waiting and weariness for her?

It is at dawn, perhaps, that Venice appears to us as of old a city of joy. In the cold glittering light of sunrise the deserted canals are fulfilled with a kind of ancient poetry and all the ardour of silence. Above, the stars are dying in a sky almost green and rimmed with gold. Some mystery of light coming from the cave of darkness has passed over the city, and the palaces and towers and churches seem insubstantial,

fairy-like, aërial, and magically new. A cold faint wind blows from the sea; and as the gondola flies towards the dawn past the Ducal Palace, that seems like a house of ivory, past San Giorgio, that is delicately flushed and tall, like a youth almost, gradually the expanse of sea and the strength of the sea-wind dominate the city that has already faded away as a dream. The great red sails of the fishing-boats, bellied by the wind, the foam under their bows, the music of the buffeting of the little waves raised by the salt sea-wind, the growing splendour of that immense horizon,—all are fulfilled with a riot of joy, a profound enthusiasm for life, conscious of itself and of nothing beside. And gradually the ear becomes aware of the thunder of waves, the joyful song of the surf, and at last the boat leaps forward and lies panting upon the eternal waves of the great sea that has already consumed so many eternities.

But at night all is changed. Perhaps under a full moon all the domes are glistening with silver; while before one, far away out over the lagoon, disappearing at last into the heaven's heart, stretches a path of pearl, along which the gondola passes slowly and gently, as though the way were indeed precious. It is then, in the numberless smaller canals and in the Grand Canal too, one may watch the city dying so slowly, and understand her profound sorrow. How indifferent she is to the life that goes on around her! neither the love-songs of the living nor the chanting of those who already look upon death as upon a dear

mistress move her at all, for she is thinking of her own destiny. Far away from her thoughts now are the lust and love and glory of the world that still live in the voices and mandolins of the gondoliers. What is it to her that the Piazza di San Marco is full of men and women, that in the Salute they are singing Compline, for she is thinking of her husband the Sea, and of her destined bridal bed.

And still beautiful, still the most lovely city of our world, she will gradually or in a moment be lost to us, and he her husband will not greet her as less than a queen. All the spoils of the splendid ships, all the beauty of his prey, all that in the centuries he has stolen from us, all the sunshine he has stored in his deep indestructible caverns, he will lavish upon her, and every night he will deck her with innumerable stars. Ropes of seaweed, opalescent and rare, shall sway like beautiful snakes in her hair; banners woven by the secret sway of the sea shall float from the tall campanili; on her left hand shall flash the mighty ring of the fisherman; and over her heart a red and burning sun shall flame. Thus in the silence of that lucent world the sea shall make her his own at last.

XIX.

AT PADUA.

WITHIN easy reach of Venice, Padua stands in the plain that lies at the foot of the Euganean hills. Chiefly noteworthy on account of St Anthony and Giotto, it has nevertheless entertained in its day many illustrious and humble personages, among them Mr John Inglesant and Mr Nicholas Ferrar. Mr John Evelyn, a contemporary of both, has given us in his Memoirs the following description of Padua in the seventeenth century that will not be without interest for the reader:—

On the . . . June we went to Padua [from Venice] to the faire of their St Anthony, in company of divers passengers. The first *terra firma* we landed at was Fusina, being onely an inn, where we changed our barge and were then draune up by horses through the river Brenta, a strait chanell as even as a line for 20 miles, the country on both sides deliciously adorned with country villas and gentleman's retirements, gardens planted with oranges, figs, and other fruit belonging to y^e Venetians. At one of these villas we went ashore to see a pretty contrived palace. . . . The toun stands on the river Padus, whence its name, and

is generally built like Bologna on arches and on brick, so that one may walk all round it dry and in the shade w^{ch} is very convenient in these hot countries, and I think I was never so sensible of so burning a heate as I was at this season, especially the next day, which was that of y^e faire, filled with noble Venetians by reason of a great and solemn procession to their famous cathedral.

Mr John Inglesant being in Padua at a somewhat later period may be permitted to add to this description a few further particulars. He says:—

The failure of the silk trade, owing to the importation of silk from India into Europe, had destroyed the prosperity of many parts of Italy; and in Padua long streets of deserted mansions attested by their beauty the wealth and taste of the nobility, whom the loss of the rents of their mulberry groves had reduced to ruin. Many houses being empty, rents were exceedingly cheap, and the country being very plentiful in produce and the air very good, a little money went a long way in Padua. There was something about the quiet gloomy town with its silent narrow streets and its winding dim arcades by which you might go from one end of the city to the other under a shady covert—that soothed Inglesant's weary senses and excited brain.

It is another picture we get from the learned and devout Mr Nicholas Ferrar, his biographer; including as it does something of the life in that magnificent century at the famous university here.

For travellers from beyond the Alps [she writes] the chief attractions of the Italian Oxford now lie in the picturesque cathedral on the river bank, and the silent garden where

among long lines of mulberry trees stands the deserted chapel which Giotto painted while he listened to the talk of Dante.

It was very different in the seventeenth century. The city was crowded and overflowing with youths who came from all parts of the civilised world, eager to study in its famous schools of law and medicine. The students in the great University of Law were classed in twenty-three "nations," each of which had its own officers and its own rules, and was permitted, under the sole condition of not interfering with the Government or religion of the State of Venice, to live according to its own customs. Its humbler sister the University of Arts could number but seven "nations," five of which belonged to the States of Italy, the foreign students being grouped as "oltremonte" or "oltremare"; but the *artisti* enjoyed equal independence with the aristocratic *quiristi* or law students. Neapolitan and Tuscan, Frenchman and German, Pole and Dalmatian, Englishman, Scot, Hungarian, Spaniard, Cypriote, each when he came forth from the magnificent palace (once the dwelling-place of the Dukes of Carrera), which is still the home of the university, and went to his lodging in the fresco-painted streets of the students' quarter, found himself in the midst of a little world of his own countrymen, where he might unmolested practise the manners and profess the religion of his own land, a toleration possible at that time in no State of Italy or perhaps of Europe [certainly not in England] but the territories of the Venetian Republic, which, owing its importance mainly to its wide commercial relations, used every means in its power to make foreigners feel at home on its soil.

Quarrels of course were of constant occurrence in this mixed crowd of unruly young men, and the luckless "Virro"

who might rashly venture to interfere was often ill-used and even stabbed with impunity. It was very dangerous, says Evelyn, to traverse the streets after dark. When St Francis de Sales, who was a student in the University of Law from 1587 to 1591, irritated his companions by his refusal to join in their evil ways, they attacked him with blows, and the future bishop was forced to defend himself with his sword.

This was the world in which Ferrar found himself when some time in the spring of 1615 he entered the University of Arts, in which was taught medicine, geometry, philosophy, and rhetoric. There was an anatomical theatre and a “garden of simples rarely furnished with plants,” to which was attached a school of pharmacy, which had been in existence for more than sixty years. There were also two hospitals for the study of clinical medicine, furnished with the “greatest helps and most skilful physicians,” and most miserable and deplorable objects to exercise upon, “very carefully attended, and with extreme charity.”

It is to no university but to a tiny chapel in a garden of mulberries that the traveller comes nowadays. The chapel of Madonna dell’ Arena is not far from the very middle of the city. It stands in the old Roman arena, whose shape can still be traced in the oval of the garden. Giotto is said to have painted the frescoes in the Chapel during the time Dante was in Padua. His work, always profound and broad, is sure to win the love of those who follow Mr Ruskin.

One dare scarcely enter Florence indeed, or at least Santa Maria Novella, should one be unwilling to worship in the dark cloister a tiny fresco, where, with every weapon his mother tongue provides and many of his own invention, Mr Ruskin stands on guard. It is, perhaps, at least for the English reader, impossible to study Giotto apart from Mr Ruskin's work. Perhaps Mr Ruskin is too devout, even before so worthy a god as Giotto. His supreme achievement seems to have been to free painting from the Byzantine manner. At least his men and women, his gods and angels, were once alive. But he seems to have desired rather to express thought, character, than beauty, thus to a large extent influencing the whole Florentine school. Kugler says of him : "It is impossible to over-estimate the influence of Giotto's genius. He opened a fountain of Nature to the gifted generations who succeeded him in Italy, which permeated through the length and breadth of the land, spreading beauty and fertility in its course." The which is perhaps rather true than well expressed. It would be superfluous for me to name the subjects, one by one, of his work in the Arena chapel here in Padua. Every guide-book devotes pages to them. They are devoted to the life of Christ and the life of the Madonna. On the wall above the high altar Christ is seen in Glory, on the western wall of the chapel Giotto has painted The Last Judgment. And of all his work here, The Resurrection seems to me the most lovely, with perhaps The Nativity coming

next. They seem to me beyond the rest to attain to a supreme naturalness, which is absent from much of the lovelier work of Fra Angelico, and which seems to have been Giotto's especial characteristic.

From this chapel of Madonna one goes to the church of "Il Santo"—St Antony of Padua. Born in 1195 at Lisbon, St Antony received at his christening the name of Ferdinand, which, when he became a son of St Francis, he changed for that of Antony—it is said from devotion to the great Abbot Antony, the Patriarch of monks; for it was in a chapel under his invocation that St Antony of Padua was received into the Franciscan Order. His father was an officer, Martin de Bullones by name, who fought in the army of El Consultador. As a youth Antony was one of the community of canons of the cathedral at Lisbon, where he had his schooling. But not long after he had, at the age of fifteen, "entered among the regular canons of St Austin," he desired greater seclusion and silence, and so went to the convent of the Holy Cross belonging to the Order of St Austin at Coimbra. There he appears to have become enamoured of the ascetic life, and to have followed it during eight years. Suddenly a new idea seems to have awakened him. Don Pedro, Infant of Portugal, about that time brought, with what pomp and reverence we may well imagine, the relics of five Franciscans, lately martyred, from Morocco. Antony was immediately possessed by an enthusiasm for that order, desiring above all things to lay down his life in the cause

of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Franciscans, who doubtless had observed the youth, seeing his enthusiasm, encouraged him to join them, a step from which naturally the canons of Holy Cross endeavoured to dissuade him. And in all the struggles, both interior and with his fellows, that followed in this his desire, it is the poverty, the austerity of the Franciscan Order that attract him, that in the end compel him to desert to St Francis.

In 1221 he, having obtained the consent of his prior, entered into the Franciscan Order of Little Poor Men, taking the name of Antony, as I have said. And consumed by that horrible enthusiasm for death that is the mark of so many of the saints, he early set out for Africa to seek for martyrdom and to preach Christ's Gospel. "He was scarce arrived there, however, when God, satisfied with the sacrifice of his heart, visited him with a severe fit of illness, which obliged him to return to Spain for the re-establishment of his health." By chance the ship in which he sailed, baffled from its course by contrary winds, touched at Messina, where Antony heard that St Francis, the very god of his idolatry, was holding a "general chapter" at Assisi. Thither he went in spite of his sickness, and having set eyes upon that Mirror of Perfection, he desired never again to leave him, determined to forsake not only his friends but his country also so that he might stay near St Francis. No superior, however, would agree "to be troubled" with him in his condition

of sickness, till at length a certain Gratiani from Romagna sends him to a hermitage at Monte Paolo, near Bologna. Here he appears to have buried himself in silence, permitting neither his learning nor his communications with God to be so much as guessed at; till one day the Franciscan convent is entertaining some Dominican Friars, for the Dominicans and Franciscans are always thought of as friends, and the Franciscan superior, wishing to show his guests honour, desires one of them "to make an exhortation to the company." But they all with one accord began to make excuse, saying that they were most miserably unprepared. Then the superior desired Antony to speak just as God should direct him, and he "begged to be excused, alleging that he had only been used to wash the dishes in the kitchen and to sweep the house." However, he is persuaded, and all are astonished not only at his learning but also at his eloquence and humility. This marvellous eloquence, humility, and learning, all in combination, comes to St Francis's ears, who sends Antony to Vercelli to study and to teach. St Francis's letter, in which he recommends this course to him, is as follows: "To my most dear brother Antony, Friar Francis wishes health in Jesus Christ. It seemeth good to me that you should read sacred theology to the friars, yet so that you do not prejudice yourself by too great earnestness in studies; and be careful that you do not extinguish in yourself, or in them, the spirit of

holy prayer.” After this Antony appears to have taught divinity at Bologna, Padua, Toulouse, and Montpelier. Soon, however, he forsook the schools for the life of a preaching friar, in which he travelled through many lands, making many converts and performing many miracles, but at last he comes face to face with that Ezzelino, lord of Padua, whom Browning names,—

“Grey, wizened, dwarfish, devil Ecelin.”

This fiend in human shape had in one day murdered more than 12,000 persons in Padua, and the city of Verona too had “lost through him most of its inhabitants.” Antony without fear confronts him and tells him of his sins—when, instead of ordering his guards to murder the saint, as seemed most likely, “to their great astonishment he descended from his throne pale and trembling, and putting his girdle round his neck for a halter, cast himself at the feet of the humble servant of God, and with many tears begged him to intercede with God for the pardon of his sins. The saint lifted him up and gave him suitable advice to do penance. . . . Ezzelino seemed for some time to have changed his conduct, but after the death of the saint relapsed into his former disorders. At length, being taken prisoner by the confederate princes of Lombardy in 1259, he died distracted in close confinement.” Well might the Pope—Gregory IX. it was—call Antony the Ark of the Covenant; well may the people of Padua always love him.

St Francis dying in 1226, there succeeded to the Generalship of the Order a certain Brother Elias, who, besides being worldly-minded, appears to have forgotten the rule of the order as regards poverty. Against him Antony, and, strangely enough, a certain Englishman also, Adam by name, protest, and are in consequence persecuted till they appeal to the Pope, who appears to have received them graciously. Soon after this, and after a visit to Monte Alvernia, where St Francis received from Christ the Stigmata, Antony is made provincial of Romagna, having some time previously retired to Padua, where he died on June 13, 1231, in his thirty-seventh year. "At the first news of his departure," says Butler, following the Bollandists, "the children ran about the streets crying, 'The saint is dead.'" He was canonised by the Pope, Gregory IX., in the following year. About thirty years after, the great church of Il Santo was built in Padua, and his relics were there interred. Such in brief is the life of him whom all the world loves and turns to when it has lost or mislaid anything. He, like all Franciscans, is a protector of the poor. At his tomb in Padua, reader, breathe a prayer, not for him but for thyself and me.

XX.

AT VERONA.

M R RUSKIN'S 'Architecture and Painting' contains pages of curious felicity on the beautiful city of Juliet. He speaks of her as a city with whom Nature herself might compete and be vanquished, and compares her with Edinburgh for nobility of position—a strange comparison. For Verona with her cypresses and campanile, her palaces and amphitheatre, her swift and splendid river, her vivid and passionate history, seems to me to be profoundly different, not in position alone, from the city of Jenny Geddes and Princes Street. One may perhaps very aptly and truly personify the two cities in the figures of Juliet and Jenny Geddes.

I suppose the amphitheatre is still the chief sight in Verona as it was in John Evelyn's day. "The vastnesse of y^e marble stones is stupendious," he says, and "This I esteem to be one of the noblest antiquities in Europ, it is so vast and intire, having escaped the ruines of so many other public buildings

for above 1400 years." Yet, in spite of the fact that, to me at least, the arena of Verona appears in some inexplicable way more "stupendious" than the Coliseum, it is not there that one lingers curious of Christian dust, so precious and so old, but, as I think, in the churches of Michele Sanmicheli, and at evening in the gardens of Count Giusti's villa, where the cypresses are, I think, finer even than those of Hadrian's garden, near Tivoli. And it is perhaps here in these gardens that the very atmosphere of antique Italy, Italy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at the least, is to be found. The majestic and melancholy cypresses, that yet in their cheerful enthusiasm for heaven are beautiful, like ideal monks with hands pointed in prayer, or like solemn tapers ecstatically burning for the glory of our God, seem to invest the scene with a new kind of beauty, that leads us at last to the contemplation of the beauty of holiness. And, on the eve almost of leaving Italy, it is some such emotion of her ideal self that we would carry away. All the panoramic life of Venice; the melancholy splendour of Rome, with its worldly ambitions, its modern vulgarity and degradation; the hideous brutality and ignorance and noise of Naples,—seem now to fade into just nothing at all before the quiet beauty and calmness of Verona as seen from these gardens, or the soft outline, almost spiritual, of the far-away Apennines as seen from Pisa, or the Certosa, near Florence, seen from a field of corn powdered with irises and poppies. It would

seem as though the art which was born amid such perfection must itself reach perfection without the struggle and effort that is necessary for any attainment whatsoever in the North. It is as though one were in a "chosen" land—a land indeed "flowing with milk and honey." Something of this beneficence is visible too in the people—the peasants. One seems to understand that they were born with a different soul from us Northerners. They are more at one with a Nature that for the most part is urbane and sumptuous, yet without luxury, indeed with a kind of "dry beauty" about her that after all was the very morality of all Greek art. Passionate she may be, but always joyful, always fulfilled with joy, even in anger. The melancholy that has so profoundly gathered our own land to itself, that seems indeed to be a very part of our landscape, and above all of our sky (surely the aspect of heaven is man's chiefest influence), is not to be found save perhaps in a part of the country around Naples near the Lake of Avernus. And especially in this pleasant country that has but lately been restored to Italy, and in Umbria, this peaceful cheerfulness is found suggesting very aptly, not to the traveller alone, the truth that not rebellion but peace is the perfection of culture.

As the traveller wanders up and down the antique streets of this city of Verona he will come upon much that is worthy of admiration. The tombs of the Scaligers, of which Mr Ruskin has written with all his knowledge and enthusiasm; the Dominican

Church of Sant' Anastasia, a lovely Gothic building of the thirteenth century; the tomb of Il Conte Guglielmo di Castelbarco, the Palazzo del Consiglio, the Mercato Vecchio and its open-air staircase, and the Campanile that rises 300 feet into the soft sky, the Roman remains and the market-place that was the Forum,—all these the travellers may see in a single walk, and, lovely as they are, they will speak to him of his own dream.

But it is, I think, the church of San Zenone, with its detached campanile of alternate lines of brick and marble, that strikes as it were the keynote of this city of antiquity and romance by its rapid Adige. San Zeno, built in 1138-1178, has something mystical about it, something that is, as it were, a Gothic spirit cleansed and softened. Three arches of triumph span the nave, the last being the arch of the chancel, under which lies the crypt, half visible from the nave. In this beautiful crypt San Zeno lies buried in a stone sarcophagus, mounted in bronze, that, curiously enough, the setting sun, even in so underground a place, sometimes reaches. The low roof of the crypt is supported by forty-eight slim columns of various forms, and the three round arches that face the nave are one of the most beautiful and surprising effects of the church. The choir and chancel are reached from the nave by two magnificent flights of steps on either side of the screen, on which are statues in marble, of the thirteenth century, of Christ and His Apostles, the curious figure of San Zeno himself, in whose

hand is a fishing-rod with a dangling fish, referring, let us hope, not to Christian baptism, but to his supposed love of fishing in the Adige. Julian the Apostate, the sad and enlightened emperor whom the puritanical fury of the monks of his time drove to despair and forgetfulness, is said to have been in power 380, when San Zeno set out for heaven. One treasure of art the church contains, a Madonna and child enthroned with SS. Peter and Paul, John and Augustine, on the left, and SS. John the Baptist, Gregory, Laurence, and Benedict on the right, together with angels, by Andrea Mantegna. It is difficult to see, unless, as is not unlikely, a flight of steps is at hand, for it is hung so high that it is almost invisible from the ground. The cloisters are beautiful.

It is not, however, those things which can be named and enumerated that make San Zenone precious, but the atmosphere, the aspect of the church itself. It seems to possess an inexhaustible gift of suggestion, and in this gift, as it were, is akin to Sant' Ambrogio in Milan. To kneel under its painted wooden roof is to attain to a new kind of sincerity. One multiplies one's faith by detaching from it all luxury that has not attained antiquity. Something of the faith, the vision, that is buried under the pagan marble of the more splendid churches of Rome disengages itself from the very fabric of the humbler churches of Italy. Religious initiators could not breath this atmosphere for a moment. San Zenone seems to wear the sharp

impress of an absorbing motive. It was built in faith, not without visions of heaven, in all sincerity of heart, by men on whom the world and all we mean by worldliness had not left a mark as they have done to-day on all of us. They looked on their own city and their land of fair plain and supreme mountain, and they refused to build what was unworthy of all that. And having nothing to unlearn in the desire of their hearts, they occupied themselves in simple fashion with God's house, having not a little inward beauty in their hearts, seeing they were born under that soft ineffable sky.

XXI.

AT MANTUA.

OF Mantua, forlorn upon her lakes, where over the pale green water the red sails of the fishing-boats pass how languidly under the casements, we have often dreamed in the winter over the fire in England, while turning the pages of the Mantuan.

“ . . . primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas,
Et viridi in campo templum de marmore ponam
Propter aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
Mincius, et tenera prætexit harundine ripas.”

Nor is she less lovely than our dreams of her. A city of silver, her Campanili shining into her ample sky, forlorn among her sedge and her pale green water, she is still the city of Virgil.

“ Mantua, vae miseræ nimium vicina Cremonæ.”

Since, reader, you are determined to travel by rail, it is perhaps here almost more than anywhere else that you are a loser. You entirely miss the walk

that Dickens has described so well, the walk from Verona that Romeo went.

Was the way to Mantua as beautiful [he writes] when Romeo was banished thither, I wonder? Did it wind through pasture land as green, bright with the same glancing streams, and dotted with fresh clumps of graceful trees? Those purple mountains lay on the horizon then for certain, and the dresses of these peasant girls, who wear a great knobbed silver pin through their hair behind, can hardly be much changed. Mantua itself must have broken on him in the prospect with its towers and walls and water as it does now. He made the same sharp twists and turns perhaps, over the rumbling drawbridges; passed through the like long curved, wooden bridge; and leaving the marshy water behind approached the rusty gate of stagnant Mantua.

It is almost the same to-day, if you can be persuaded to come on foot or by carriage.

Mantua to me is the most forlorn city of Italy: something of the stillness and silence of her lakes seems to have fallen on her too. She is a city of large and level spaces of sunlight and shadow and of silence. Gradually, imperceptibly, she is decaying under the sunshine and the damp of her lagoons. She is more like a city of dreamland than any earthly place of abiding. Profoundly beautiful, death has already loved her and encircled her with something of his silence. There is but little to be seen in her silent streets and palaces.

Giulio Romano, the famous pupil of Raphael,

lived here after his master's death, and seems almost to have made the town his own.

The excellent qualities of Giulio [says Vasari], causing him to be esteemed the best artist in Italy after the death of Raphael, the Count Baldassare Castiglione, who was then in Rome as ambassador from Federigo Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, and was the intimate friend of Giulio, . . . did his utmost by prayers and promises to prevail on that master to accompany him to Mantua, Baldassare having been commanded by the Marquis, his master, to send him an architect of whose services he might avail himself, whether for his own palace or the necessities of the city, and having moreover observed that it would be particularly agreeable to him if he could have Giulio. The latter thereupon declared at length that he would certainly go, provided they could obtain the permission of the Pope; and the desired licence being secured, Baldassare, who was returning to Mantua, . . . took Giulio with him to that city.

There is much of Giulio's work in Mantua, and for this reason, if for no other, Mantua is worthy of a visit. The Duomo in Piazza San Pietro, the interior of the Palazzo Ducale, the frescoes in the Scalcheria of The Chase of Diana, and Venus in the Vulcan's Workshop, and the Palazzo del Tè, are all the work of this one man. The Palazzo del Tè alone should give the traveller pause ere he omits Mantua from his little list of places to be seen. A dreary, forlorn place enough, desolate and damp, built in a swamp, it is the creation, with all its decorations, of a genius overcome perhaps by the profound dreams that arise from the lakes and lagoons around the city. Some

terrible distress of mind, amounting almost to a disease, seems to have been devouring the very soul of the painter.

To render his work still more fearful and terrible [says Vasari], Giulio has exhibited many of the giants, who are of the most extraordinary forms, as well as of immense stature, in the act of falling to the earth, some backward and others on their faces as they are differently struck and wounded by the lightnings and thunderbolts ; some are already dead, others writhing with their wounds, and still more lying crushed and partially covered by the mountains and edifices which have fallen upon them. Wherefore let none believe that he could ever behold any work of the pencil better calculated to awaken fear and horror, or more truly natural and life-like, than that before us ; nay, whosoever enters that chamber and sees all the doors, windows, and other parts, constructed as they are awry, and, as it were, on the point of falling with the buildings, and even the mountains tumbling around in ruin, cannot fail to be in doubt whether all be not about to topple down upon him, and the rather as he sees the very gods in heaven, some rushing here and others there, but all taking flight. Another circumstance remarkable in this work is that it has neither beginning nor end ; the whole is, nevertheless, well connected in all its parts, and continued throughout unbroken by division or the intervention of frame-work or decorations, so that all the objects which are near the buildings appear to be of great size, while those at a distance, and scattered about the landscapes, seem to diminish gradually until they become lost amidst infinite space, whence this apartment has the appearance of a wide tract of country.

Robbed as she has been of her pictures, beside Giulio

there remains work by Andrea Mantegna of a more pleasing character perhaps than usual—"charming cupids, like fleecy clouds turned to babies, playing in a sky of the most marvellous blue, among garlands of green and of orange and lemon trees, cut into triumphal arches, with the Marquis of Mantua and all the young swashbuckler Gonzagas underneath."

But in spite of all the splendour that here and there meets the eye, Mantua is a fairy land forlorn. Desolate among her lagoons, she awaits no future. In her streets the past, full of fantastic silences and sunshine and the awful damp of forgotten nights, sits with a great dignity watching its own funeral. Over her gates seem to be graven the words "Ave atque vale."

XXII.

AT MILAN.

MILAN is the most modern city in Italy. To the traveller returning from a journey through the peninsula his arrival in Milan is accompanied by a shock of surprise. Can this still be Italy? he asks himself as he gazes on the busy streets and the extraordinary and certainly not Italian cathedral. And yet Milan is not all modern: she too, like every city in this marvellous land, has gifts for the traveller, and indeed hers are not the least splendid in the world.

Within her picture-gallery, the Brera, are some of the most lovely works of the school of Leonardo—and La Madonna della Grazie still holds the remains of Leonardo's own fresco, The Last Supper. But it is, as I think, in her churches that Milan is really rich, so that when one has forgotten the cathedral altogether—not a difficult matter—one may still find in Sant' Ambrogio, Sant' Eustorgio, La Madonna, and San Nazzaro Maggiore, buildings as lovely as any in Italy.

Milan is, however, a city entirely given over to the

electric tram system that has its centre, not inappropriately, in the Piazza del Duomo. But in the churches and in the picture-gallery one soon forgets the hideous modern aspect of this ancient city. Sant' Ambrogio, to my mind one of the finest churches in Italy, was founded by St Ambrose, who was Bishop of Milan in 385.

Ambrose [says Cardinal Newman] was eminently a popular bishop, as everyone knows who has read ever so little of his history. His very promotion to the sacred office was owing to an excitement of the populace. Auxentius, his Arian predecessor in the See of Milan, died A.D. 374, upon which the bishops of the province wrote to the then Emperor, Valentinian the First, who was in Gaul, requesting him to name the person who was to succeed him. This was a prudent step on their part, Arianism having introduced such matter for discord and faction among the Milanese that it was dangerous to submit the election to the people at large, though the majority of them were orthodox. Valentinian, however, declined to avail himself of the permission thus given him; the choice was thrown upon the voices of the people, and the cathedral, which was the place of assembling, was soon a scene of disgraceful uproar as the bishops had anticipated. Ambrose was at that time civil governor of the province of which Milan was the capital; and the tumult increasing, he was obliged to interfere in person with a view of preventing its ending in open sedition. He was a man of grave character, and had been in youth brought up with a sister who had devoted herself to the service of God in a single life; but as yet was only a catechumen, though above thirty years of age. Arrived at the scene of tumult he addressed the assembled crowds,

exhorting them to peace and order. While he was speaking a child's voice, as is reported, was heard in the midst of the crowd to say, "Ambrose is bishop": the populace took up the cry, and both parties in the church, Catholic and Arian, whether influenced by a sudden enthusiasm or willing to take a man who was unconnected with party, voted unanimously for the election of Ambrose. It is not wonderful [Cardinal Newman continues] that the subject of this sudden decision should have been unwilling to quit his civil office for a station of such high responsibility: for many days he fought against the popular voice, and that by the most extravagant expedients. He absconded and was not recovered till the emperor, confirming the act of the people of Milan, published an edict against all who should conceal him. Under these strange circumstances Ambrose was at length consecrated bishop. His ordination was canonical only on the supposition that it came under these rare exceptions for which the rules of the Church allow when she speaks of election "by divine grace," by the immediate suggestion of God; and if ever a bishop's character and works might be appealed to as evidence of the divine purpose, surely Ambrose was the subject of that singular and extraordinary favour. From the time of his call he devoted his life and abilities to the service of Christ. He bestowed his personal property on the poor; his lands on the Church, making his sister tenant for life. Next he gave himself up to the peculiar studies necessary for the due execution of his high duties till he gained that deep insight into Catholic truth which is evidenced in his works, and in no common measure in relation to Arianism, which had been the dominant creed in Milan for the twenty years preceding his elevation.

Thus began that marvellous life which ended on

Good Friday the fourth of April 397. It was said of him before he died, by Count Stilico, "the guardian and Prime Minister of Honorius, who governed the Western Empire," that the day "this great man dies destruction hangs over Italy." By common consent he ranks as one of the four great doctors of the Church, the others being St Jerome, St Augustine, and St Gregory the Great.

The church, however, that Ambrose founded in Milan has long since disappeared, the present church having been built by Bishop Aspertus of Milan in 871 in the same place. It is therefore into an almost primitive church we come when we enter Sant Ambrogio. One notices many features in common with other early churches in Italy, among which not the least attractive and important is the cloister, or courtyard, before the great door. San Gregorio Magno in Rome has a similar atrium. Here the unbaptised persons who were still under instruction assembled for Mass.

Inside, the church is plain but beautiful. One seems to realise the homely sincerity, the humility of brickwork as opposed to the fantastic marble and stone of the cathedral. There is a true Lombard note in the severe and lowly beauty of so sweet a house of God. Up in the choir, which is encircled by a fine marble screen of great antiquity, behind the high altar, almost by chance one comes upon the very chair of St Ambrose—the great archbishop—in which the present Archbishop of Milan, too, sits in state

even as St Ambrose did fifteen hundred years ago. The high altar itself is, I suppose, the most splendid in all Italy. Even to look on it costs five francs. It consists of plates of gold in front and silver behind, curiously worked in relief. The golden plates relate the life of our Lord, the silver the life of St Ambrose. The altar is encrusted with innumerable gems and enamel, and was the work of one Volfinus, a German goldsmith of the ninth century. He made it in honour of St Ambrose at the bidding of Angilbertus, Archbishop of Milan. Four columns of porphyry support the canopy, which is decorated with reliefs, also of ninth century workmanship. And it is under this precious altar, with its splendid canopy, that St Ambrose lies buried in a little silver shrine in the crypt. But full of marvels as the church is, among which not the least noteworthy is the pulpit placed over an old tomb containing some precious Christian dust about which we know nothing, it is really as a whole that I at least find its perfection—in its sheer beauty, absolutely without pretence, a beauty entirely sincere and homely, that as yet is not become a thing of airs and of the world.

And it is a somewhat similar charm that hangs about Sant' Eustorgio, built by Tommaso Lombardino for the Dominicans in the thirteenth century in the place of a much older church, dating, it is said, from the fourth century. Originally the church appears to have been built to receive the relics of the Magi, that were afterwards stolen

and carried to Cologne. So the tale goes. But for us to-day the church is chiefly delightful by reason of its exquisite brickwork,—a style, it may be, found in its perfection only here in Milan and in Verona,—and above all its steeple of brick too, and of the thirteenth century. St Peter Martyr, for whose tomb the thirteenth-century church was built, is buried here. His pulpit, “from which he often confuted the Manichæans,” is still in the west front in the open air. His shrine in the chapel of San Pietro Martire, by Balduccio da Pisa, is a very noble work. Balduccio’s work is not often met with, and is most worthy of study. It will be long before I can forget the figure of Charity hugging to her breast two little children. There is something almost modern in the sentiment of the value of youth as such, of its æsthetic perfection.

In the Madonna della Grazie, where Leonardo painted his great picture of The Last Supper, one is pursued by a different spirit from that of humility. Walter Pater has most perfectly expressed the sentiment of its fading and faded beauty in a lovely passage that I venture to take from his book, ‘The Renaissance’ :—

On the damp wall of the refectory, oozing with mineral salts, Leonardo painted The Last Supper. Effective anecdotes were told about it, his retouchings and delays. They show him refusing to work except at the moment of invention, scornful of any one who supposed that art could be a work of mere industry and rule, often coming the

whole length of Milan to give a single touch. He painted it, not in fresco, where all must be *impromptu*, but in oils, the new method which he had been one of the first to welcome, because it allowed of so many after-thoughts, so refined a working-out of perfection. It turned out that on the plastered wall no process could have been less durable. Within fifty years it had fallen into decay, and now we have to turn back to Leonardo's own studies, above all to one drawing of the central head, at the Brera, which, in a union of tenderness and severity in the free-lines, remains one of the monumental works of Mino da Fiesole, to trace it as it was.

Here was another effort to lift a given subject out of the range of its traditional associations. Strange after all the mystic developments of the middle age was the effort to see the Eucharist not as the pale Host of the altar, but as one taking leave of his friends. . . . Vasari pretends that the central head was never finished. But finished or unfinished, or owing part of its effect to a mellowing decay, the head of Jesus does but consummate the sentiment of the whole company—ghosts through which you see the wall, faint as the shadows of the leaves upon the wall on autumn afternoons. This figure is but the faintest, the most spectral of them all.

It is certainly not in the words of another that you might wish to learn the story of Leonardo's faded picture on the old convent wall. "As one taking leave of his friends," it is the sentiment that overwhelms one in so sad and dreary a place.

And not only in that old convent, but almost everywhere in Milan, it is of Leonardo one thinks. The chief figure in all these splendid years, he seems

to have come to Milan almost like Prometheus with fire from heaven. He really created Milanese art. Luini, his chief pupil, almost overwhelms the Brera with his work, and while some of it is negligible, he sometimes almost attains the perfection of his master. Perfection, after all it is just that that Leonardo sought for. One hears that he was impatient of all work done for practice or for money—impatient of it, that is, as art. Well, I think he was right. And in an age such as ours, when but little work is done for any other result than money, his life is at least a pattern by which we increase the infinite smallness of ourselves. In the Brera one may see how high something, it may be a little less than genius, led a man, who patiently sought what his master, not less patient, had succeeded so triumphantly in winning. If the smile, the adorable features, and the enigmatic aspect of Leonardo's women were tricks, which I for one will never believe, then certainly later painters were curiously clumsy in the attempts to imitate an artifice that we have been told was so simple. After all, *Mona Lisa* is not the only work by Leonardo that we possess, and in the drawing in the Brera, that outshines all the Luinis and makes Raphael's work too seem somewhat sweet and obvious, we have, I think, a very perfect proof of the visions Leonardo saw.

He at least seems always to have lived at the highest point not only of every moment but of his every vision. He is not careless even of the

minutest, the subtlest point of perfection. And seeing that he lived for the most part in some splendour, it is surprising to find that his trick at least served to make him realise his dream of perfection.

It is perhaps difficult in Milan to-day to think of one who cared so much for beauty as to be patient and to wait upon her.

CONCLUSION.

TO come to the end of any book we have written is perhaps but to realise how far short we have fallen of our intention. The vision appeared to us so splendid—yet how poor a thing we have made of it! For in betraying that exquisite emotion to captivity, we have robbed it perhaps of almost all its beauty. To realise this is the constant agony of the writer. He feels, it may be, little better than a murderer. And if it is true, as we have been assured, that “all men kill the thing they love,” my love for Italy must excuse the faint eloquence of this book. For to defend her who is already to most of us so precious were ridiculous. And though for no lesser cause, yet for this, O Mother Church, pardon my weak arm too, that would have defended what none can reach.

At least, at least men will know that I loved her; and though to many that will seem but a small thing, I at least am assured that I owe to it everything that is precious in my life. Without Italy I am beggared. Though God saw fit to make me an Englishman, it was in Italy I caught my first glimpse

of heaven. Yet He knows under her sun and sky I envy no archangel in Paradise. Neither am I in a hurry to meet the illustrious dead while I can live in her quiet cities, or listen to the mandolins in the evening, or gather grapes in my vineyard. It is such simple things, I am told, together with a little little more, that will cost me delight eternal. Well, doubtless there will come a day when I am not so much as remembered in the world, when even my friends will speak and behave themselves as if I had never been. After all, friendship is but “Ave atque vale”; always of two lovers even, one must look on the dead face of other. It is no new thing. For the world—yes, even for a tiny corner of it—men have been content from the beginning to sacrifice eternity. If it is necessary to think of this world as enemy to the next, it shall go hard but earth will beggar heaven.

Yet sometimes I think that I am deceiving myself. Is all that lies behind that beautiful image that we have made and named the Past really so lovely as I suppose, or has my imagination played me false? Was the old world so beautiful? really, actually; or is that only another lie with which man has deceived himself for his comfort in an eternally ugly world, where actuality is always sordid and unlovely, and, after all, the lies, the dreams, the immense fabrications of the mind, the only beautiful things for ever and ever? Am I engaging myself to do battle for a chimera? One might almost think so on looking round

on life to-day. Yet I am not deceived : the world was once as lovely as our dreams of it, though maybe not quite the same. Be sure he who carved the frieze of the Parthenon had saturated himself not only with Beauty but with Reality and Nature, and was but calling on his mind to refine and his hands to reproduce what in truth his very eyes had seen. Am I deceiving myself? How can I ever know!

I have seen the fishermen put out to sea in the dawn after a storm, when the air was cool in an ecstatic happiness, as though nature had expressed herself, had relieved herself from some unbearable emotion, some intolerable thought ; and every now and then the wind would sweep just for a little distance over the waves still white with hurry, almost like a sob breaking from a woman after long crying, involuntary and full of weariness. And it has seemed to me as I watched those sailors, unconscious of nature's thoughts or sorrows, sailing so swiftly over the haggard waters as though in that very unconsciousness there was the actual beauty of the old world that went, almost with a kind of innocence, about its own simple business.

Or again, as I have read, on some summer's evening, in some magnificent and simple book, the very world itself has been translated for me into a more profound and beautiful language than any I have really heard with my bodily ears. And I have understood that my world too is lovely, if I can only find sufficient silence so that I may listen

and be very quiet for a little, or see—ah, for a moment—some light among the shadows, some new perspective in which the world would be transformed for me, so that I might see the simplicity of a thing so frail and mortal. And in reading the mighty hexameters of Homer I have most often attained to this vision when, never without excitement and indescribable emotion, I have whispered the magnificent words in which Agamemnon tells of his own death and of the death of Cassandra. At that moment it has seemed to me that Beauty was inseparable from simplicity, and everything really inexpressible save in the most simple language and the easiest words.

Thus, reader, I have thought on the plains of Apulia and in the Apennines, far from reality. Have I succeeded in building that ivory chamber within which a man may place in safety all his desires? Shall I be able to see through the outer shell of the everyday world, and let that be as though it were not? After all, is that not really the end of all education? But above all else that I have wished has been the desire to avenge Beauty upon the crowd, to tear in pieces the vulgarity that it seems to me clothes the Great Beast; and, if necessary, in defence of my dream, to chastise it with words of joy.

If the worship of physical beauty is really a direct negation of the whole modern world, that will bring with it an unattainable desire for the past, a mad jealousy of the profane and vulgar present, a war in

one's own soul between that which is old and that which is new in life, in the world, in the hearts of men, how shall we excuse ourselves? Hither doubtless points the old litany when it prays, "A me salva me, Domine."

But, day by day as I go down to the insatiable sea or gaze at sunset upon the indestructible headlands, I am rebuked. Have I not loved Italy well, am I not content, are not heaven and earth agreed? Be sure even now as ever the world belongs not to the many but to the few. One single and profound thought outweighs in the eternities all the toil and sweat, the fevered endeavour, the sullen and unremitting labour of the crowd. To him who can keep a space and silence in his soul, even in a city, all that is worth having is assured. It is for him I write. He will understand the intention of this book, and understand my failure.

But there is the same glory as of old before the rising places of the sun. The sea is still angered, and calm anon, the stars are still unnumbered, the sky inviolate, we are still made of dust. Look you, there is our hope. Even Roine may still be reached by walking.

THE END.

Appendix



AN ITINERARY.

IT may be of some assistance to the reader if a line of route enabling him to see Italy practically in her entirety is mapped out for him. To begin then. Howsoever he may enter Italy—from the Riviera or from the St Gothard or from Mont Cenis—it seems to me that Genoa, the first city of the South, should be his starting-point. Genoa is a city by herself, utterly different from any other Italian city: three days at least should be given to her.

Leaving Genoa by the midday train, before evening Pisa is reached, where two days may very easily be spent, and more, too, if the traveller is indifferent to time. From Pisa an excursion to Lucca is easily made, where also two days are not too short a time in which to see all the beauties of that quiet city. Leaving Pisa just before midday, Siena may be reached *via* Empoli early in the afternoon. In Siena, if possible, a week at least should be spent, for Siena is filled with innumerable delightful things that it is utterly impossible, in spite of the guide-books, to see in a day or two. There are many excursions to be made from Siena, to Monte Oliveto, to San Gimignano, and

other places. Leaving Siena early, Orvieto may be reached by mid-afternoon *via* Chiusi. Two days at least should be given to Orvieto, whence to Rome is but two hours in the train. Two weeks must be devoted to sheer sight-seeing in Rome, of which delightful occupation guides and guide-books will tell the traveller more than he can ever remember. I have therefore tried to set before the traveller aspects of Rome which the guides altogether forget to show him. From Rome, Naples may be reached in five hours, and should the traveller have plenty of time at his disposal, many delightful places may be visited *en route*, such as Segni, Monte Cassino, Caserta, etc.

For most of Italy, and for this part south of Rome especially, Mr Hare's Guides are much the most delightful. South of Naples there is a country almost untouched by the tourist, and very well worth a visit. The accommodation is for the most part almost intolerable, however. Mr Gissing's book, 'By the Ionian Sea,' will give the traveller very delightfully some idea of what he may expect. Of Sicily I have said nothing—both it and the south of Italy deserve a book to themselves, a book written in the great leisure of Italian summer days.

Returning from Naples to Rome, where a few of the more interesting museums may be revisited, we then set out for Perugia, visiting Spoleto for an hour or so on the way. From Perugia, Assisi should be visited, or the traveller may live in Assisi itself very

comfortably. The inn at Perugia, however, is delightful. Four days will be enough for Perugia and Assisi together perhaps, but a week should be spent in this country if possible, especially if it is fine weather. From Perugia we set out for Florence, taking Arezzo on the way. Two weeks at least should be given to Florence, which is inexhaustible, and one of the loveliest cities in the world—especially loved, for some reason or other, by the English. From Florence to Bologna and thence to Ravenna and back again, and then from Bologna to Venice is the route I suggest. Rimini may also be visited from Bologna if the traveller so desires. In Venice also a fortnight is not too much, especially if Mr Ruskin be the guide. But I think myself that Mr Hare is better for the traveller.

From Venice, *via* Padua, Verona, and Mantua, to Milan is or ought to be at least a week's journey; when after four or five days in Milan, the traveller will retire to the lakes at Como, or Cadenabbia, or Bellagio, or Lugano, or, best of all as I think, Bella Vista on Monte Generoso to recoup. Thus in something like eleven weeks most of Northern and Central Italy, including Naples, may be seen without too much fatigue.

If I may so far enter into the domain of the guide-book, I would say to the traveller: Save money where you like, only never in railway fares, especially for long journeys. After all, one's health is the chief consideration, and I would rather go without

my luncheon than without a sleeping-car. I hope the traveller may get both.

To conclude this brief time-table. Let me suggest to the traveller the advisability—nay, the absolute necessity—for scrupulous politeness. An Italian is not to be driven. But he may be led with ease—but with ease. I will not say that politeness will do everything that money will do in England, but it is nearly as ubiquitous and therefore the fashion. To be impolite is to write yourself down a mere boor, unspeakably ill-educated. And if there be those who are angered at the very precious sight of the Host or the glorious spectacle of a procession, and who happening upon this book in a fit of dejection, have read so far, let them at least allow so much advice as this from one who sympathises with their scepticism and bad taste, not at all: Forget your anger and your dislike, and for the sake of your country and her honour behave like gentlemen, and forbear from forcing your opinions under the notice of those whose guests you are.

A NOTE ON EDUCATION IN ITALY.

THE desire for universal education is one of the most obvious of the various passions in which the latter part of the nineteenth century indulged itself. So terrible has this passion proved that now even the most stupid and the most depraved can read of his own heroic vileness, infamy, and despair in the daily press of his land. Beside this monstrous public confession, the Confessional of which the English have an almost historic dread shines like a star in its delicate and classical quietness. Even the very poor, to say nothing of the middle class, are now made free of that mighty kingdom of the written word, in which they are of course bewildered strangers, without any sort of guide, and therefore they suffer not from literature but from fiction both licentious and vulgar, from the lies of all the politicians, the dreams of the visionaries who like themselves are strangers in this land, and from the immense vagueness of their own awakening minds.

Surely education was the master-passion of the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. In Italy from 1871 to 1881 so fiercely did it burn that the

number of those between twenty and twenty-five years of age unable to read was reduced from 63 to 54 per cent. Still in 1894, thirteen years later, 55 per cent of the married people could not read. Of late years, however, especially among the male population, things are very different, for in 1893 only 38 per cent of the conscripts for the army were utterly illiterate.

There are in Italy between 46,000 and 52,000 elementary schools, with an attendance of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ million children. In England and Wales, with a population of $32\frac{1}{2}$ millions (about the same as Italy), there are about 20,000 elementary schools inspected, with accommodation for $6\frac{1}{2}$ million scholars. Above the elementary school there is the gymnasium, then the lyceum, and then the university. If we put the number of gymnasia at 700 or 750, and the number of lycea at 300, and the number of universities at 17 or 20—viz., Padua, Pisa, Rome, Bologna, Turin, Genoa, Naples, Modena, Parma, Pavia, Messina, Macerata, Catania, Siena, Florence, Sassari, and Cagliari—and add that the attendance at the gymnasia is about 50,000, that at the lycea about 10,000 or 11,000, that at the universities about 21,000, we shall have a hasty bird's-eye view of the statistics of education in Italy to-day. But this is really to see nothing. Of military schools, naval schools, technical schools and institutes, medical and veterinary schools, and schools of agriculture, mining, engineering, commerce, science in its many branches, I say

nothing. The subject is too vast to interest the traveller—especially the Englishman, who has yet to interest himself in education in his own land.

The religious question is not unknown in Italy, but it has not usurped the throne in matters of elementary education as it has with us. If one who has but seen things from the outside may express an opinion, I should be inclined to say that politics occupied too much of the time of the university man. It is no rare thing to find two or three regiments of soldiers in hiding, ready to suppress the undergraduate if he becomes excited, as he invariably does when he sees what is expected of him. The student is taken too seriously, and thinks of Freedom or Liberty rather as his mistress than as his wife.

A NOTE ON THE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

THE political system in Italy, as everywhere else, is very much what the people choose to make it. In Italy the people have not made it a success. Every householder paying from 150 to 500 francs a-year in rent (in some places the former, in others the latter) has a vote; so has every one who can read and who at the same time pays 20 francs a-year in taxes directly to the State. Every farmer too who pays from 450 to 600 francs a-year in rent, every soldier who fought in the war for unity, and every graduate at a university have votes; and there are other qualifications. Yet the voters are less than 8 per cent of the nation, while in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland they are 17 per cent. There are still to be considered, however, the numbers of those who, while entitled to vote, do not exercise their right for various reasons; they are more than 40 per cent of the whole.

The Government consists of King, Senate, and Chamber of Deputies. The Senate, which, roughly speaking, corresponds to our House of Lords, is

a House of citizens over forty years of age, nominated for life by the king. There are certain other restrictions beside that of age, but almost any respectable person may become eligible. The Senate has a certain power in that it is trusted to a greater extent by the people than is the Camera. Messrs Bolton King, and Okey, however, say that "it is a piece of almost unused machinery, neglected by everybody, and quite without influence in the national life." That is certainly true at present, and yet language of that kind sounds very much the same as the vain threatening of the House of Lords at the time of the second Home Rule Bill. It seems to me that there is a very important and useful life before the Senate.

The Chamber of Deputies consists of men over thirty years old, who are elected for a term of five years. The Prime Minister is, as in England, chosen by the king. All Ministers receive a salary of 25,000 francs (£1000 in our money), which is quite inadequate for their needs. Ministers travel free, in a most magnificent manner, on the railway; but during their very precarious tenure of office they have an uncomfortable time of it, owing to the fact that they are expected by their friends to repay them for services rendered, with the gift of offices, favours, introductions, and recommendations. I myself have seen a certain Minister worried nearly out of his life in a small town that he was visiting by the attentions of the town band, the police, the

mayor, and the people, who were all bent on getting something out of him.

A general election takes place on any given Sunday, on the same day throughout the Peninsula. To ensure his return a candidate must obtain more than 50 per cent of the votes. The corruption on these occasions is extreme. "Newspapers are subsidised from the secret funds, school teachers are impressed to assist in canvassing, railway employees are warned, or, if influential Socialists, are removed to a distant post during the election. . . . Policemen are stationed at the polling-booths to shut out opposition votes. . . . Registers are tampered with in the Revision Courts. A teacher of literature has been known to be struck off as illiterate." So say Messrs Bolton King, and Okey in their valuable book, 'Italy To-day.' It is always the Government of the day that has the power to be the villain of the piece. It is the Government that bribes the Mafia and Camorra with Secret Service money to come to its assistance; perhaps it is to their usefulness at the elections that the Mafia and Camorra owe their continued existence. The candidates, too, do not hesitate to bribe in the most open manner. "It is believed," say the authors of 'Italy To-day,' quoted above, "that Pelloux saved up £400,000 for electoral contingencies. In 1892 £8000 are said to have been spent in one constituency. At the elections of 1900 bribery seems to have been rampant both in the North

and in the South." Indeed, the prices of votes, subject to fluctuation as they are, like other marketable things, should be quoted in the newspapers from day to day. The Government might then seize the opportunity "to go to the country" when there was a "slump" in votes and thus save Italy a large amount of money.

Is it likely that such a Government should accomplish anything but harm?

A NOTE ON THE ARMY AND NAVY.

THE annual cost of the army and navy is just over £16,000,000. This expenditure, which really would seem to be necessary, is very heavy for a country so poor as Italy. It is true that these sixteen millions include pensions, but even without these it is a heavy price for Italy to pay for safety. Out of these £16,000,000 the navy takes some £4,000,000. It would certainly seem to a foreigner that it is absolutely necessary to keep up the navy, yet it is to be feared that this is not done, at least as it ought to be. Italy is far more exposed to an attack by sea than by land. Her effective fighting fleet consists of 3 first-class battleships built, and 6 building; 5 second-class battleships built, and 2 third-class battleships; 4 first-class cruisers built, and 1 building; 5 second-class, and 11 third-class; 11 torpedo boats and 3 torpedo-boat destroyers built, and 8 building; 7 gun-boats, and 3 coast-defence ships. That is a total of 16 battleships built or building, against France's 34; 21 cruisers built or building, against France's 55; 22 torpedo boats and destroyers built or building, against France's 209. From these figures the

traveller will see that Italy cannot abate one lira from her naval expenditure,—that indeed if she were to stand alone she would be at the mercy of France, for instance, at sea. However, it is generally believed in Italy that the navy is an efficient fighting machine. The officers are recruited from the upper classes of society, the men conscripted from the coast population. There is a Navy League, but it has as yet been given but little hearing, though everyone is convinced of the necessity of keeping up the sea power of the country.

The army consists in peace time of some 330,000 men, that in war time might become three and a quarter millions. It consists of Cavalry, which is the fashionable and most brilliant arm, Artillery, Infantry, and Engineers; the Riflemen or Bersagliere, who wear plumes of cock's feathers on their wide-brimmed hats; the Cacciatori Alpini, who are, as indeed are the Chasseurs Alpins in France, among the finest soldiers in the world; and the Carabineers.

The army is conscript, the officers, of course, being educated at a military college. Thus the nation is, as in France and Germany, really a nation of soldiers, for every citizen between the ages of twenty and forty is liable to be called out in case of war.

When an Italian is twenty years old he is called on to serve his country, unless he is the son of a widow or an only son, or a university student, in which last case he only postpones his services. There are three classes of recruits: the first serve for two years, and

are on the special reserve for seven years more; then they are on the ordinary reserve for four years, and lastly they pass into the militia for seven years, and can only be called on for service in case of invasion,—this brings them to the age of forty. The second class are nominally in the army for eight years, but in reality they are only called out for a month or two every other year or so: they then pass into the ordinary reserve and the militia, as those of the first class do. The third class enter the militia at once, and so come off easily best.

The Cavalry is the aristocratic arm of the service; the officers are gentlemen, and often rich, too. The Infantry is not invariably officered by gentlemen; perhaps it is none the worse as a fighting machine on that account, though this is doubtful, to say the least.

The army has done much for United Italy—indeed without the army United Italy would be impossible. Certainly in Italy conscription has meant a sort of civilisation.

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